00029970

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 23 March, 2016

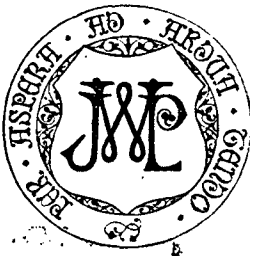
GEORGE CANNING

AND HIS TIMES.

B 616

BY

AUGUSTUS GRANVILLE STAPLETON.



29970

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON, WEST STRAND.
1859.

[*The Author reserves the right of Translation.*]

9

942.082
Sta/Geo
29970

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER II.

MR. THERRY'S MEMOIR OF MR. CANNING — STATE OF EUROPE WHEN MR. CANNING LEFT OXFORD — HIS LETTER DATED FROM THE TEMPLE, 1792 3

CHAPTER III.

MR. CANNING'S ORATORY 15

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGIN OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR — MR. CANNING APPOINTED UNDER-SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS — HIS INTERCOURSE WITH MR. PITT—FALL OF FRENCH DIRECTORY—THE CONSULATE 29

CHAPTER V.

LETTER OF THE FIRST CONSUL TO GEORGE III.—THE REPLY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT—MR. CANNING'S VINDICATION OF THE USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE REPLY . 45

CHAPTER VI.

LETTER FROM MR. CANNING ON HIS OWN OFFICIAL PROSPECTS —RETIREMENT OF MR. PITT — LETTER ON THE ADDINGTON ADMINISTRATION, AND PEACE OF AMIENS 57

CHAPTER VII.

PEACE OF AMIENS—BATTLES OF TRAFALGAR AND AUSTERLITZ —MR. PITT'S DEATH—CHARACTER OF MR. PITT 72

CHAPTER VIII.

'ALL THE TALENTS' ADMINISTRATION — DEATH OF MR. FOX — LORD GRENVILLE'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH MR. CANNING . . 88

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRENVILLE ADMINISTRATION—PRUSSIA—DISMISSAL OF THAT MINISTRY BY THE KING—FORMATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DUKE OF PORTLAND . . 109

CHAPTER X.

THE PEACE OF TILSIT, AND THE EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN, 1807 123

CHAPTER XI.

NAPOLEON'S BERLIN AND MILAN DECREES—THE BRITISH ORDERS IN COUNCIL—WAR AND PEACE WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 139

CHAPTER XII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE PENINSULAR WAR—SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY'S AND SIR JOHN MOORE'S EXPEDITION—MR. HOOKHAM FRERE—BATTLE OF TALAVERA 154

CHAPTER XIII.

WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND AUSTRIA — EXPEDITION TO THE SCHELDT—RESIGNATION OF MR. CANNING 171

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. PERCEVAL'S ADMINISTRATION—MR. CANNING'S EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE WAR IN SPAIN—FALL OF NAPOLEON—KING'S ILLNESS—THE REGENCY. 182

CHAPTER XV.

LORD WELLESLEY RESIGNS—PROPOSALS TO LORDS GREY AND GRENVILLE TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT — THE REGENT RETAINS MR. PERCEVAL'S MINISTRY—MR. PERCEVAL'S ASSASSINATION—NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORMING A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN 1812—WHIG CREED—LISBON EMBASSY 196

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CURRENCY—AND FINANCE 211

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROMAN-CATHOLIC QUESTION 240

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAGE

THE PRINCESS OF WALES BECOMES QUEEN CONSORT—HER RETURN TO ENGLAND IN 1820—PROCEEDINGS CONSEQUENT ON THAT EVENT 265

CHAPTER XIX.

TRIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE 296

CHAPTER XX.

MR. CANNING'S RESIGNATION AFTER THE QUEEN'S TRIAL—HE ACCEPTS THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA . 315

CHAPTER XXI.

LIVERPOOL ELECTIONS—REFORM OF PARLIAMENT 332

CHAPTER XXII.

FOREIGN POLICY—PARTITION OF POLAND—MR. CANNING'S VISIT TO PARIS, 1816—DEATH OF LORD LONDONDERRY (CASTLEREAGH)—MR. CANNING BECOMES FOREIGN SECRETARY . . 352

CHAPTER XXIII.

FOREIGN POLICY EXPLAINED IN SPEECH AT LIVERPOOL—LETTERS ON CONGRESS AT VERONA, AND TO THE KING—CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR HENRY WELLESLEY 368

CHAPTER XXIV.

SPANISH AFFAIRS—LETTERS TO SIR WILLIAM A COURT—FRENCH OCCUPATION OF SPAIN—RECOGNITION OF SPANISH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE 385

CHAPTER XXV.

DISCUSSIONS RESPECTING THE RECOGNITION OF SPANISH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE — MR. CANNING'S LETTER TO THE KING 415

CHAPTER XXVI.

VISIT OF SIR WILLIAM KNIGHTON TO MR. CANNING — ESTABLISHMENT OF CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KING AND MR. CANNING—RECEPTION OF SPANISH AMERICAN ENVOYS BY HIS MAJESTY 435

CHAPTER XXVII. PAGE

AFFAIRS OF THE EAST—TURKEY AND RUSSIA—GREEK INSURRECTION 454

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GREEK AFFAIRS—DEATH OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER—DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S MISSION TO ST. PETERSBURGH—GREEK PROTOCOL—GREEK TREATY 470

CHAPTER XXIX.

OCCUPATION OF SPAIN BY THE FRENCH ARMY—COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT RESPECTING IT. . 488

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. CANNING'S LETTERS ON PORTUGUESE AFFAIRS—M. HYDE DE NEUVILLE—COMTE DE SUBSERRA—BRAZIL 500

CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. CANNING'S VISIT TO LORD GRANVILLE AT PARIS—LETTERS RESPECTING THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND THE LORD CHANCELLOR—SPANISH ATTACK ON PORTUGAL 516

CHAPTER XXXII.

INVASION OF PORTUGAL BY SPAIN—LETTERS PREVIOUS TO KING'S MESSAGE ANNOUNCING THE SENDING OF TROOPS TO PORTUGAL—MR. CANNING'S SPEECHES ON THAT OCCASION 537

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RICHARD, FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS . . . 568

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CHANGES IN LORD LIVERPOOL'S ADMINISTRATION—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF YORK, AND ILLNESS OF MR. CANNING—SEIZURE OF LORD LIVERPOOL—MR. CANNING APPOINTED PREMIER—RESIGNATION OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND MR. PEEL—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. PEEL AND MR. CANNING ON THAT OCCASION—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF MR. CANNING 576

APPENDIX. 607

Private Secretary's Docket.

Mr T.T. Evans: late Edr of British Press. Furnival's Inn. March 3, 1826; — encloses an Autograph copy of Verses written by you at Oxford in 1793.

Fac-simile of Mr Canning's Docket in answer.

The Verses are genuine.
Does Stapleton
remember my
endeavouring to
repeat them to him
in our joining to
Ichworth last year?
Make a fair copy.
& I will return the Mt.
to Mr Evans by

GEORGE CANNING

AND

HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the beginning of October, 1824, Mr. Canning was travelling with the author, alone, from London, to Lord Bristol's, at Ickworth. We started early: in those times, a distance of seventy miles was not accomplished in less than eight or nine hours. On the morning of our departure, there appeared in the *New Times* (then a daily paper), a letter, containing an anecdote respecting the college days of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning. After we had proceeded a stage, I inquired if it were a true story. He replied, that it was substantially correct. And he then took up the history of his life from those days, and never ceased till we were within a few miles of Cambridge, when, tired with talking, he said he must defer the rest for another opportunity.

That opportunity occurred within three weeks, for (business having called him to London) we again returned to Ickworth together; and he then brought to a conclusion the story of his life.

The leading points of what he said made an indelible impression on my memory.

He would also frequently take a long walk alone with me, and on these occasions he would fully explain the political transactions which had occurred during the preceding month or fortnight; and more than once, after a long detail, he has emphatically said to me, 'I tell you these things that you may know them hereafter.'

I do not intend, in the following pages, to write a detailed biography of Mr. Canning; they are designed to be supplementary and explanatory;—as a contribution to aid some future biographer.

My object is to discharge a duty to his memory, by setting forth his true character as a man and his policy as a statesman. In so doing, he will be made to speak for himself as much as possible. I shall not only not dwell on the well-known facts of his history, but I shall avoid, as much as I can, any repetition of them.

CHAPTER II.

MR. THERRY'S MEMOIR OF MR. CANNING—STATE OF EUROPE WHEN MR. CANNING LEFT OXFORD—HIS LETTER DATED FROM THE TEMPLE 1792.

THE Memoir of Mr. Canning, which is prefixed to the edition of his Speeches, published by Mr. Therry, was drawn up by that gentleman, and submitted before publication to Mr. Canning's widow. Its dates are perfectly accurate; and, as far as it goes, all the statements which it contains may be relied on as authentic. It is unnecessary to repeat here what relates to his early years: his school days and college life being so well known.

His career, therefore, will be here taken up from the period when he left Oxford at the beginning of 1792. At that period the astounding events which marked the progress of the Revolution in France, absorbed the minds of the whole population of these islands. The hopes, which so many entertained at the commencement of the struggle, that it would issue in the establishment of freedom, and a better government for the French people, were being gradually extinguished, and those who began by admiring, were rapidly being compelled to denounce the change, as the parent of crimes, sickening and revolting to the human heart.

Almost all the political events which occurred on

this side of the water turned upon what was passing on the other. Of the atrocities of which the revolutionists were guilty, few indeed in this country were to be found, of whatever politics, who did not look upon them with horror, and who did not speak of them with execration; but there was nevertheless a large body of persons in Great Britain and Ireland who were the warm advocates of what were then called the 'new opinions;' and those 'new opinions' were, that all old institutions ought to be overthrown, to be replaced by new ones, modelled upon what were alleged to be sounder principles more recently brought into view by the rapid progress of mankind in knowledge and enlightenment:—

> If thus, by love of executions
> Thou prov'st thee fit for Revolutions;
> Yet one achieved, to *that* art true,
> Nor wouldst begin to change anew:
> Know this,
> Thou think'st amiss;
> Deem, to think true,
> All Constitutions bad but those bran new.*

It was in this state of things that Mr. Canning wrote to a college friend,† who was then travelling abroad, the following expression of his sentiments. The letter from which these extracts are taken, is dated Paper Buildings,‡ December 13, 1792.

My dear Boringdon,

You naturally wish to hear something respecting the present state of politics in this country; and first, of that body of men after whom you have made some particular inquiries

---

* Poetry of *Anti-Jacobin*.

† The late Earl of Morley, then Lord Boringdon. ‡ Temple.

in your last letter — *The* Association. It still lives and flourishes, but with what degree of vigour and unanimity, with what prospect of permanence, or with what powers and intention of activity, the time is not yet come when one can determine. It will not, however, be long before we shall know. The Parliament is at this moment assembled, and the debate on the Address probably begun. I do not wait to be able to give you the result of it; because, were I to do so, I should be too late to send this letter to Morpeth,* who sets out to-morrow morning, and who will deliver it; and (as he is probably himself at this time in the House of Commons) an account of the debate along with it to you, at Vienna. I have been told, indeed, that Grey† intends to begin a thundering attack, but from his attacks and his thunder, I do not think much to be apprehended. Whatever line of conduct the Association may now pursue, whether they persevere in their efforts to obtain a reform in Parliament, with a view, as they prudently stated, of working other *subordinate* reforms; or, whether alarmed, in common with the rest of the country, at the mischief which they have already begun, and which there are not wanting those spirits who would most readily push to its completion, they may abandon the project, which, if they mean no harm, is useless, and if they mean to go all lengths, is wicked in the last degree; in all cases, it will require much time, much caution, and vigour, and good fortune to heal the wounds which the peace and security of England received from them. The breach which was occasioned by their first proceedings in the party (if party it may be called, which has no principle of unanimity in it) of opposition, is, as they say, made up. And yet the Duke of Portland, and some of his immediate friends, are pledged (as I have understood) to support Mr. Pitt in all the strong measures which may be necessary for the preservation of the country—even so far as to a war with France —if a war with France should be thought unavoidable. What part Mr. Fox is to take, what he thinks, what he can

* The late Lord Carlisle. † The late Earl Grey.

say, or what he can do, I am at a loss to conjecture; and I do not meet with anybody who estimates it with more confidence and certainty than I do. Hitherto he has avoided explicit declarations, and what declarations he has made have had the effect of giving to both parties (of opposition) a sort of right to claim, and ample reason to distrust him.

The state of the country is, beyond denial, very critical. That there is a party whose aim it is to imitate France in almost every particular, I am confident; but that the party is very contemptible in character and ability, and that it is not at present very numerous, I am pretty well assured; and I am willing to hope, also, that it is not likely to become much more numerous, nor to gain any accession of abilities or character, now that the soberer part of the people have been roused to a sense of their danger, and excited, as they have been, with great diligence and effect, to exert themselves for the preservation of the public safety and their own, as the French party has done for its destruction. When I say French party, I do not say it at random, or as a term of common abuse, but from a conviction that the violent people here are, individually if not collectively, for the most part, under the influence, and in some degree, it may be said, in the *pay* of France; and, indeed, the late decree of the Convention, professing their readiness to assist any discontented combination of individuals in any country against the established government (be that government what it may) of that country, at the same time that it manifests, in the publishers of that decree, a most profligate contempt for all the laws, written or unwritten, of national justice, policy, and morality, and a stupid and ignorant want of discrimination and preference between good and bad forms of government, and a most impolitic and imprudent acknowledgment that they consider the shout of any set of self-elected spokesmen for the people as the voice of the people itself; and a thousand other dirty and degrading crimes against taste, and science, and honour, and everything that is useful and commendable in human wisdom; at the same time, I say, it very fairly warrants a suspicion that any set of men who cry out with

great vehemence against the existing constitution of the country in which they live, and proceed from decrying it to work, as far as they are able, its downfall, act, if not with an understood and ratified covenant, at least with a tacit and implied hope, that they shall not want the assistance of the French when they call for it; and that they shall not be tardy in calling for it, when they find their unassisted efforts ineffectual.

What my opinions and feelings are in these times, you will perhaps in some measure have collected from what I have already written. With regard to France, so long as they were struggling for their own liberty, so long as they were clearing the way for the erection of that Constitution, of which the inhabitants of the country, as if with *one* soul and *one* voice, had decidedly and unanimously expressed their choice, and demanded the trial, I *wished* most piously and heartily for the total overthrow and destruction of every impediment that should be thrown in the way of their exertions. And *this*, from a thorough persuasion, that the right of a nation to choose for itself its own constitution is a right which they claim from *God* and *nature* alone, and for the exercise of which to *God* and *nature alone* they are amenable. I will not deny that, in addition to this *motive*, I was actuated also by one other of an inferior operation; I mean a sort of *speculative fondness*, which I entertained for the idea of a *Representative Republic;* and a desire to ascertain, by the *experience* of a *neighbour*, without being at any of the risk or expense of the experiment at *home*, how far *such* a form of government would increase or diminish the freedom and happiness of a people.

But, when I see the first use made by France of her emancipation from the embarrassments with which she was involved, is not so much to proceed in the *settlement of her own* constitution, and the confirmation of *her own* freedom and happiness, as a wild and wicked attempt to involve all *other* nations in *similar* calamities, that they may be obliged, I suppose, to aid her in contriving some general mode of extrication from them; when I see, in their insolent oppression

of states which could not make head against them, an example of tyranny, at least equal to *that* with which *they* were themselves assailed by the confederacy of the despots of Europe against them—in their open violation of treaties, a contempt not only for *this* or *that particular* mode of negotiation, as obsolete or antiquated, or unworthy of a free state (which might be some excuse, though not perhaps a very convincing one), but of *all law, all equity,* all sense of right and wrong, as well what has been established by usage as what is *innate* and *inherent* in the minds of *men;* I *then* feel that *their* situation and disposition are extremely changed, and that *my* sentiments and wishes must, if I have any consistency, change with them. Helpless and insulted, oppressed at home and attacked by a formidable invasion from abroad, struggling with an exertion, unparalleled in history, for the acquirement of a blessing of the value of which no nation ever seemed more sensible, and of which perhaps no nation but themselves ever made a bad use the moment that they had acquired it; in *these* circumstances, my opinions, my hopes, and (as far as I could command any of efficacy) my prayers went with them; and I exulted in the defeat of their enemies, and their own consequent liberty to act as *they* thought *proper,* and as I hoped, I should think *right.* Now, indeed, I find them a very different people, victorious *everywhere,* but where it most *concerned* them to look for victory, over *their own* cursed factions and *banditti* of *assassins* and *conspirators;* not oppressed, and attacked, and insulted, but insolent beyond all bounds, professing universal enmity, and, as far as in them lies, preaching universal oppression, and proving to demonstration that the best blessing of Heaven, when put into bad hands, as liberty into theirs, instead of contributing to the tranquillity and comfort of its possessors, may be converted into a plague for the disquiet and destruction of all mankind; in this character they carry nothing with them of mine, but my contempt, and dread, and execration.

With regard to home politics, there is nothing here of which I have any occasion or disposition to talk violently;

party I have none. *The* Association, and the subsequent divisions of that party of which I have been used to think most highly, and with which for the most part I have happened to agree in opinion, as they rendered it utterly impossible for any man to agree any longer with the *whole* of opposition, set me about considering with which half of it I felt myself most disposed to join. The result of my deliberation was something more than an indifference to either; and rousing in myself the consciousness, that being without connexion and obligation, which could in honour or necessity bind me to any individual or set of individuals whatever, I finally concluded, that to emancipate myself at once, from shackles of supposed restriction and attachment might be infinitely to my use and comfort in these times, and could in no way be represented as unfair, or impolitic, or improper.

As a professional man, it is of little consequence of which party a man is, but I believe it to be better to be of none at all; and, as a politician, when I shall arrive (as I purpose doing at some time or other) at that honourable character, I cannot but think it would be of some credit and advantage to be perfectly free to choose my own party, and profess my own principles at a season when parties will be to be chosen, and principles professed, on grounds very new, and under circumstances very different from any that have been seen in the common course of political occurrences.

You will, perhaps, be somewhat surprised at hearing this language from me; for I think it not unlikely that you are one of those who may have conceived that there are some ties stronger than those of mere habit and acquaintance which connect me with certain individuals in opposition. I will not now explain to you how and why this is not so; but I will prove to you that it is not so, by a fact, which, if you think me (as I suppose you do think me) a man of honour, will be much more convincing than any *explanation*—that is, by assuring you that, were I, at this present moment, of consequence enough to make my opinion and support of any worth or consideration—in plain words, were I (where I

some time hence hope to be) in Parliament, my support and opinion would go with *Mr. Pitt*.

It is, however, as you must see, in *mere speculation* that I speak this; for, as a *lawyer* (as wise people say) what have I to do with politics?

Believe me ever yours affectionately,

GEORGE CANNING.

This letter contains some points which are remarkable; for, at a time when Mr. Canning had not yet entered the parliamentary arena, he clearly lays down some of those great principles of policy to which he afterwards steadfastly adhered. It is the same hand which, in youth, here condemned the 'example of tyranny' set by 'the confederacy of the despots of Europe' in 'assailing' France when struggling for freedom, which also steadily denounced Buonaparte when he 'assailed' the liberty of independent nations; and which, when that wonderful man had ceased to exist, and tyranny came from the old quarter, opposed with equal decision the violation of the rights of independent states, by the monarchs who composed the Holy Alliance.

And this condemnation of the 'despots' who, in 1792, assailed France, was founded on the right principle—viz., 'that the right of a nation to choose for 'itself its own constitution is a right which they derive 'from *God* and *nature* alone, and for the exercise of 'which to *God* and *nature* alone they are amenable.'

The letter also records his views on the 'new opinions' and the 'old' ones. It is clear that, although his early sympathies were on the liberal side, he never looked with the slightest favour on plans for changing the character of the English Con-

stitution; for (after he left college) he rejected with indignation a proposal made to him by the leaders (who were attracted by his fame) to place himself at the head of that party which was seeking to subvert it.

His principles, indeed, required a change in his view of the proceedings in France.

'I *feel*,' he says, 'that their situation and disposi-'tion are extremely changed, and that *my* sentiments 'and wishes must, *if I have any consistency*, change 'with them.' He does not say, 'I *think*, nor does he use any word to indicate deliberation; but he says, '*I feel*' that, 'if I have any consistency,' I must—what? obstinately cling to my former sentiments? *No;* I must 'change' them. *Change* and *consistency!* incongruous words to be united! '*Change*,' the offspring of consistency! Yet so it is. Still, care must be taken not to mistake the nature of the change. It is not *change* of *principle*, but *change* of *opinion*—a consistent adherence to principle necessitating a change in opinion.

'The common thinker,' says Sir James Mackintosh, in writing of 'Mr. Burke, whose fate it was, in one 'part or other of his course, to encounter adversely all 'the great parties of the State,' is embarrassed 'by 'the difficulty, which he must feel, in tracing the links 'of the chain which holds together the parts of Mr. 'Burke's life as a consistent whole. Every man can 'see the dissimilarity of actions and words, but not 'many can see how necessarily they must arise from 'unchangeable identity of principle.'

'I take some credit to myself,' says Sir James, with pardonable exultation, 'for having discovered this

'when I was young,' adding, with laudable humility, 'and on many other things much mistaken.' But the knowledge of this important truth, which, with Sir James, was acquired by reflection, resulting in *discovery*, seems to have been, with Mr. Canning, *innate;* for he describes it to his friend, not as a *discovery*, but a *feeling.*

But, in whatever way Mr. Canning arrived at a knowledge of this principle, it is very certain that it was his guide through his political life; and although, as in the case of Mr. Burke, it is an operation of no small difficulty to 'separate general principles from 'the passing events to which they are applied, and to 'disengage profound truths from the gorgeous robes 'of eloquence—which are too dazzling to be penetrated 'by very feeble intellects—to distinguish between the 'philosopher, the teacher of political wisdom to all 'posterity, and the unrivalled orator employing his 'genius in guarding his cotemporaries against the evils 'of his times;' yet the task must be performed by all those who desire to rise to a just appreciation of the great talents and the profound political sagacity which distinguished Mr. Burke at the end of the last century, and Mr. Canning at the beginning of the present.

It is seen by the concluding part of this letter, that Mr. Canning had early made up his mind, when he 'arrived at the honourable character of a politician,' not to connect himself with the Whig party. It is evident from the whole tone of it, from the way in which he mentions Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, that with them he had no political sympathy, and that, as far as he was at all united to the Opposition, it was

with that section of it of which the Duke of Portland was the leader, and Mr. Burke the mover—that section which shortly after joined itself to Mr. Pitt. Mr. Canning was one of those politicians whose minds are so constituted that, having strong convictions, they are utterly incapable of acting against them. No personal aggrandizement, no official distinction, could have tempted him to undergo the anguish which he would have experienced at feeling that he was promoting measures of which his conscience disapproved. Ambitious, doubtless, he was; but he *could* not gratify his ambition at such a cost. His choice, then, lay between the Portland Whigs and the Tory *Pitt*. His inclination led him to the latter; there were undoubtedly considerations which tended to his separation from the former. It is certain that 'the 'difficulties,' described by Moore,* 'which even genius 'like his would experience in rising to the full growth 'of his ambition under the overshadowing branches 'of the Whig aristocracy, and that superseding in-'fluence of birth and connexion, which had contributed 'to keep even such men as Burke and Sheridan out of 'the Cabinet,' were not without their weight in determining Mr. Canning to which party he would attach himself; but it is impossible to read the delineation given of the state of his mind in this letter, without seeing that his sympathies and principles, at a time when he had no communication with Mr. Pitt, were sufficient to make him unhesitatingly say that, 'were 'he in Parliament, his support and opinion would go 'with' that great statesman.

* *Life of Sheridan*, vol. ii. p. 242, etc., 2nd ed.

In the following year (1793) Mr. Pitt, of his own accord, opened a communication with him; the result was, that he was returned to Parliament for the borough of Newport, through Mr. Pitt's influence, and that he entered the House of Commons as his warm and avowed supporter.

CHAPTER III.

MR. CANNING'S ORATORY.

WHEN Mr. Canning first took his seat in the House of Commons, he had achieved no inconsiderable celebrity. He was known, by his speeches at Eton and Oxford, as a very good speaker. At both places his talents had been felt and acknowledged, and it was far from an easy matter for him not to disappoint the expectations which he had raised. He had the good sense, however, not to open his lips during his first session; and he was content with listening *to*, in order that he might profit *by*, the speeches of those great masters of eloquence who then adorned the benches of the House. It was on the 31st of January, 1794, in his second session, that he made his maiden speech, in favour of the subsidy proposed to be granted to the King of Sardinia.

Various comments were, of course, made at the time upon the merits of this first effort; and it has also drawn forth not a few from those who have subsequently discussed it.

It may, therefore, be interesting to know how he himself describes it, in a letter written about six weeks after he had delivered it, between which periods he had had 'a severe illness, under which he 'had laboured for five weeks, and from which he was

'within a few days only relieved.' The letter is addressed to Lord Boringdon. It is dated *March* 20, 1794.

The *great* event—to which you allude in the postscript of your letter, is the subject upon which, in consequence of our many conversations about it before you left England, and your many remembrances of it, expressed in your letters since that time, you naturally expect that I should feel it, as my first duty and inclination, to talk to you,—took place on the 31st of January, just ten days after the meeting of Parliament, but on the very first day after the debate on the Address (for in that I thought it would be too forward to engage) on which I could find an opportunity of speaking. You will have gathered from what little I have said to Leveson* of last month, and from what I have said to Morpeth to-day, that my success was equal to my most sanguine hopes. I thought, when I began this letter, that to you, who, being already a legislator, must have a sort of fellow-feeling with me, and must understand what your sensations are to be, from what mine were, I should have courage to talk more openly, and at large, than I ventured to do to those who, only being *about* to be in Parliament, have not yet all the sympathy, and all the impudence, which would be necessary to make them think a detailed account of such a matter proper or pardonable. I intended to have told you, at full length, what were my feelings at getting up, and being pointed at by the Speaker, and hearing my name called from all sides of the House; how I trembled lest I should hesitate, or misplace a word in the two or three first sentences; while all was dead silence around me, and my own voice sounded to my ears quite like some other gentleman's; how, in about ten minutes, or less, I got warmed in collision with Fox's arguments, and did not even care twopence for anybody or anything; how I was roused, in about half an hour, from this pleasing state of self-sufficiency, by accidentally

* Lord Granville Leveson, afterwards Earl Granville.

casting my eyes towards the Opposition bench, for the purpose of paying compliments to Fox, and assuring him of my respect and admiration, and there seeing certain members of Opposition laughing (as I thought), and quizzing me; how this accident abashed me, and, together with my being out of breath, rendered me incapable of uttering; how those who sat below me on the Treasury bench, seeing what it was that distressed me, cheered loudly, and the House joined them; and how, in less than a minute, straining every nerve in my body, and plucking up every bit of resolution in my heart, I went on more boldly than ever, and getting into a part of my subject that I liked, and, having the House with me, got happily and triumphantly to the end.

To all this I had some intention of adding (if I could so far subdue my natural modesty) some account of the reception which it met from those with whom it was most my interest and ambition that it should be well received, but I find it impossible to do so, and I must therefore defer all that I have to tell you on such subjects till I see you in England.

Such is Mr. Canning's own account of his maiden speech. It will be read with interest by those who have already attained celebrity by their eloquence, as well as by those whose young hearts may now be panting to attain it. The speech, when read at this distance of time, appears both very able and eloquent, and assuredly held out that promise of future eminence to which the speaker subsequently attained.

This work being in no way intended as a biography of Mr. Canning, but rather to throw light on the most important portions of his career, it may be well here to touch upon his oratorical powers, and to inquire what were those peculiar qualifications which made him, as an orator, what he was.

In the extracts of the letter which has just been given, written with all the carelessness and unconcern, yet, nevertheless, with all the sincerity of a young man to his friend, we have, beyond all doubt, a true description of his real feelings. At that trying moment of his life, in that letter he describes 'how 'he got warmed in collision with Fox's arguments, so 'that he did not even care twopence for anybody or 'anything;' and how 'he was roused, in about half-an-'hour, from this pleasing state of self-sufficiency,' 'by 'accidentally casting his eyes toward the Opposition 'bench, and there seeing certain members laughing, 'and (as he thought) quizzing him; and how this 'accident abashed him.'

With this account of his own feelings, it is not uninteresting to compare the impression which his oratory made on the mind of his great rival, Mr. Brougham. It is given in his *Historical Sketches of Statesmen who lived in the Time of George III.*

But his (Mr. Canning's) declamation, though often powerful, always beautifully ornate, never deficient in admirable diction, was certainly not of the very highest class. It wanted depth; it came from the mouth, not from the heart; and it tickled or even filled the ear rather than penetrated the bosom of the listener. The orator never seemed to forget himself, and to be absorbed by his theme; he was not carried away by his passions, and he carried not his audience along with him. An actor stood before us—a first-rate one no doubt—but still an actor, and we never forgot that it was a representation we were witnessing, not a real scene. The Grecian artist was of the second class only at whose fruit the *birds* pecked; while, on seeing Parrhasius's picture, *men* cried out to draw aside the curtain. Mr. Canning's declamation entertained his hearers, so artistically was it executed; but only an inexperienced critic could mistake it for the

highest reach of the oratorical art. 'The truly great orator is he who carries away his hearer, or fixes his whole attention on the subject—with the subject fills his whole soul; than the subject will suffer him to think of no other thing—of the subject's existence alone will let him be conscious, while the vehement inspiration lasts on his own mind, which he communicates to his hearer; and will only suffer him to reflect on the admirable execution of what he has heard, after the burst is over, the whirlwind passed away, and the excited feelings have, in the succeeding lull, sunk into repose.

Such are the notions which were produced on Lord Brougham's mind by the oratory of a man to whom he had so often listened. No one had better opportunities of forming a correct opinion. It being, for the most part, his lot to reply to his opponent's arguments, he was therefore necessarily obliged to bestow on them the utmost attention. These remarks were written some years after Mr. Canning's death, when the feelings which rivalry engendered must have calmed down, even if they were not entirely extinguished. During the last few months of Mr. Canning's life, kindly feelings had grown up between them. In a letter to Sir Robert Wilson (a copy of which is now before me), Mr. Brougham had said:—'Amongst these hopes, the greater part are certainly 'at this time connected with Canning, in whom I place 'very great confidence. Canning had, I own, made 'me angry, or (to speak more properly) vexed and 'hurt me, by what I thought yielding to the Chan-'cellor in 1822; but all I have since seen of him, in-'cluding his indignation when I attacked him (in a 'moment of anger), has satisfied me he is disposed to 'act a high, manly, and honourable part.' It may,

therefore, be reasonably inferred that, in this opinion respecting Mr. Canning's oratory, there is no lurking feeling of animosity; and it may be fairly accepted as expressing, not only the honest and genuine, but, what is more, the unprejudiced opinions of Lord Brougham.

As, however, these opinions are directly at variance with the truth, and as they probably are at variance with the opinions of the very great majority of those who listened to Mr. Canning, it is a curious matter of speculation how Lord Brougham arrived at the conclusion that he had 'no depth;' that he 'did not 'carry his audience with him,' and that he 'never 'seemed to forget himself;' 'that he was not absorbed 'in his theme, and was not carried away by his pas- 'sions; that an actor stood before us—a first-rate one 'doubtless, but still an actor.' Whatever may have been the spirit in which Mr. Canning's subsequent speeches were made, we apprehend no man can read his own description of his first speech, and think that the person who could so describe it was describing a piece of acting, or a mere rhetorical display, and not the earnest delivery of arguments of the force and truth of which the speaker himself was not intimately persuaded. At any rate, then, he did not begin his career as an actor. If it can be shown that, at the end of his career, he was equally earnest and sincere, the intervening period may be allowed to take care of itself.

Now, certainly, during his last tenure of office, when he was about to make an important speech, his whole mind was absorbed with it for two, or perhaps three days, beforehand. He spared no labour in

obtaining and in arranging his materials. He always drew up a paper (which he used in the House), with the heads, in their order, of the several topics on which he meant to touch, and these heads were numbered, and the numbers sometimes extended to four or even five hundred. At these periods he was not easy of approach; interruption irritated him, except it related to the matter in hand. Before going down to the House he was taciturn and thoughtful, with his mind earnestly bent on the task which he had to go through. The speech delivered, he was an altered man; all his natural ease of manner returned; he was free from the weight, not of having gone through a fine piece of acting, but of having discharged a serious duty, to discharge which he had devoted the best energies of his mind. Those who saw and watched these processes, knew well enough that they were not the processes through which an actor would pass.

Take, for instance, the two speeches (the opening one and the reply) on the occasion of the sending troops to Portugal. The expedition was a small one, but the occasion was most momentous. The party of absolutism in Europe were bent on overthrowing the newly-established Constitution in Portugal. Spain was the instrument to do the work; but it was not to be attempted openly by Spanish forces. A portion of the Portuguese army was disaffected; it deserted from Portugal, and was well received by the Spanish authorities on the frontier. These troops were 'armed, clothed, and regimented' by the Spanish Government, and, recrossing the frontier, were marching upon Lisbon. England was bound by treaty to protect Por-

tugal from foreign invasion: that this was an invasion was beyond all doubt; but—was it a foreign invasion? The Portuguese Government so considered it, and applied for aid to the English Government. Hesitation, causing delay, might have been fatal. No time was to be lost; if an expedition were sent, it had to be prepared at a moment's notice. The invading force was within a hundred miles of Lisbon; the protecting force had, after it had been organized and despatched, to breast, in mid-winter, the storms of the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic before it could reach its destination. There was, however, no hesitation; not a day was lost in coming to a decision; and within four days the armament had actually sailed.

In those times there were no railways or electric telegraphs to make known with lightning rapidity the answer of England to the Portuguese requisition. The inhabitants of Lisbon were awaiting that answer in anxious expectation, for the Constitutional cause was highly popular. It came; not, however, in the shape of a despatch or a telegram, but in the shape of the armament itself appearing at the mouth of the Tagus, announcing, not that it was coming, but that it was come. 'Never,' said an officer who formed part of the expedition, 'never 'shall I forget the scene when we sailed up the Tagus; 'the shores lined with the whole population, manifesting an almost frantic joy at such a speedy and unlooked-for arrival of the wished-for succour.'

But we are anticipating events. The King's Message to Parliament was brought down by Mr. Secretary Canning on the 9th of December. So profoundly

secret had the matter been kept, even from the subordinate members of the Government, that, an hour before it was to be delivered, the whipper-in of the Government came to the private secretary, and told him 'to tell Mr. Canning he need not come down to the House, as nothing of importance was coming on.' A curious incident had just occurred. The Message had been returned from Windsor with the sign-manual of the King. At the eleventh hour, Mr. Canning (who was peculiarly jealous on such a point) discovered in it a slight grammatical error. What could be done? It would take four hours to obtain a fresh signature. A little scratching out would, however, set all to rights. Two of us set about it, and in about half-an-hour of the most delicate labour a closely-scrutinizing eye could hardly have detected the erasure.

All was now ready. A short time before Mr. Canning went down, Mr. Speaker had been duly apprised what he was to expect. There were about two hundred members present, engaged in some ordinary business. To their great surprise, the Speaker suddenly announced that 'Mr. Secretary Canning was at the bar,' and asked him—'What have you got there?' 'A Message from the King,' was the reply. 'Please to bring it up;' and it was brought up accordingly, and read amidst breathless attention. The next day was fixed for its being taken into consideration.

Mr. Canning did not deceive himself as to the true character of the step which he had to defend. He felt that it *might* be the commencement of a general war in Europe, but he was well convinced that vigour

and decision at the outset afforded the only chance of preventing one. He had no mind to allow Spain and her abettors to commit themselves, step by step, in advance, till no honourable retreat was left them, knowing that, in the end, England would be forced to resist them. He saw that, by such a course, we should infallibly 'drift into a war' against our wish, and contrary to our interest. So he resolved to nip the danger in the bud, being well convinced that the armament which he sent to Portugal, however apparently warlike, was, in reality, a measure of peace.

Still, however confident that he was right, no one could read his opening speech, much more could have heard it, without being satisfied that he was acutely alive to the responsibility which he was incurring. Assuredly such was the impression which he made upon the audience which he addressed. Assuredly no man was ever in a more earnest state of mental excitement. The next morning I found him in bed, after a sleepless night, and he was so excited and absorbed by his theme that he held my hand for at least five minutes, with the tears trickling down his cheeks, before he could begin to touch upon the proceedings of the previous evening. This was not the conduct of a man not representing a real scene; and assuredly that intense earnestness of manner, and that lightning flashing of the eye, were not the result of artificial study, but of genuine feeling and uncontrollable impulse.

If ever an orator carried his audience with him, it was Mr. Canning in his celebrated reply on the Portuguese question. Never were an assembly of men warmed into a higher pitch of enthusiasm

than were the members of the House of Commons when they broke up on that memorable night. He positively electrified his audience when he uttered those striking words, 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.' The whole House were moved as if an electric shock had passed through them; they all rose for a moment to look at him! This effect I witnessed from under the gallery.

Again—consider his defence respecting his Lisbon embassy. Every effort had been made by his opponents to ruin his reputation and to destroy his influence; every species of unworthy insinuation had been brought to bear against him; he addressed an audience containing a large body of persons who had already condemned him in their hearts. The result of the debate is thus described by the late Lord Dudley in a private letter to the Bishop of Llandaff:—

I am hardly recovered from my delight at the splendid victory Canning gained the other evening. It was certainly the greatest effect, without any exception, that I ever saw produced by a speech in Parliament. It is confessed to have been so by his enemies. I do not believe there is another instance upon record of a man having done so much by a single effort to redeem and to raise his character. The whole load of obloquy seems shaken off at once: and his prodigious abilities are now left free to carry him to his natural elevation. He is quite a new man. His influence in Parliament is at least double what it was on Monday last.*

It may be said this is the testimony of a friend; but the result of the debate proves that the testimony was true.

* May 10, 1817.

Take another example—his speech on the alteration of the Corn Laws in 1827, when he was told by the Secretary of the Treasury, just before going down to the House, that 'all the great landowners were against him, and would listen to no compromise.' Nevertheless, when he had concluded, they were (as he described them in a letter to a friend) 'all to be 'seen moving about in knots of three or four, and no 'three of them agreeing on what point, or in what 'direction, to muster an opposition.'

The most remarkable characteristic of his oratory was its depth. Let any one read his speeches, and then read those of Chatham, Burke, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Grattan, Plunket, and Brougham, and let them, if they can, extract, with the exception of Mr. Burke's, as many first principles as they will find interspersed in Mr. Canning's—principles not laid down for the passing crisis, but adapted to the affairs of men, so long as they are endowed with their present nature. This is what constitutes depth. It is true that there was no mystery, which too often assumes the appearance of depth; and that such was the light which he threw upon his subject that ordinary minds might be led to imagine that there could be no depth, because there was no darkness. Mr. Horner said of his Bullion speeches, 'He played with the most 'knotty subtleties of the question as if it had been 'familiar to him.' In short, he illuminated his subject (whatever it might be), and made it so clear to his audience, as proved that he had probed and sounded it in every conceivable direction. Mr. Canning was a man who contrived to place all subjects at the right focus before his mental vision. He

would never sacrifice distinctness in order to magnify his field of view. For, as in the telescope, there is a point at which all things become clear, and beyond which all things become obscure; so with the human mind—the pretending to see farther and deeper than is possible, serves but to produce that confusion and mystery which is too often dignified by the appellation of depth.

In another page Lord Brougham more justly observes, 'Superficial observers, dazzled by Mr. Canning's 'brilliance, and by its being sometimes over-indulged, 'committed their usual mistake, and supposed that he 'who could thus adorn his subject was an amusing 'speaker *only*, while in truth he was helping on the 'argument at every step, often making skilful state-'ments perform the office of reasoning, and oftener still 'seeming to be witty, when he was merely exposing 'the weakness of hostile positions, and thus taking 'them by the artillery of his wit.' This is a very happy description of one of Mr. Canning's oratorical excellences, for he frequently baffled his opponents by a clear statement of their arguments. He never misrepresented them, generally adding to their force, in order more effectually to destroy them.

On the other hand, many orators are apt ingeniously to misrepresent an adversary, in order to obtain a victory over him. The consequence is, that those who so deal with their opponents, rarely succeed in carrying conviction home to their audience; an undefined consciousness prevails, even amongst those who do not detect the fallacy, that they are listening to arguments which deal with something very like the real point in dispute, but still *not* the real one.

Beyond general expressions of praise, or dispraise of a particular speech, I do not think that Mr. Canning has left behind him any criticism of Lord Brougham's oratory; but, I recollect one day, when riding on the Downs near Brighton, telling him that I had received a letter from London, stating that Mr. Brougham was dangerously ill. 'Poor fellow!' said Mr. Canning, 'I am very sorry to hear it;' and then, after a minute's pause, he added, 'If he should be taken from the House of Commons, there will be no one left to pound and mash.'

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGIN OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR — MR. CANNING APPOINTED UNDER-SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS — HIS INTERCOURSE WITH MR. PITT—FALL OF FRENCH DIRECTORY—THE CONSULATE.

AS before the breaking out of hostilities between England and France in 1793, the political questions which agitated men's minds, all turned upon the respective views which they took of the progress of the French Revolution, and the influence and bearing of French principles upon our own internal affairs; so, after the war had begun, domestic politics all turned upon its origin, and upon the necessity or the expediency of carrying it on, or of endeavouring to bring it to a conclusion.

On both these points a strongly marked difference of opinion prevailed amongst the leaders of the great Whig party. Mr. Fox, the leader of the party in the Commons, and Mr. Grey* and others, looked with favour on the new principles, and condemned the war with France, as an unjustifiable one, in which Mr. Pitt, without any real necessity, had involved the country. On the other hand, the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham, together with the more numerous section of their party, looked upon those principles as dangerous in the extreme, and were

* Afterwards Earl Grey.

of opinion that the war was a war of necessity, not of choice, and that the Minister was forced into it against both his wishes and his will.

Mr. Fox, in his speeches, always argued that Mr. Pitt caused the war; yet England did not begin it, for France declared war against England, not England against France. If Mr. Pitt caused the war, he must have done it by giving France such extreme provocation as to compel her Government to resent it by war. The proposition, then, that Mr. Pitt did give this provocation, was what Mr. Fox was bound to prove in order to make good his accusation. But it must be evident to those who have attentively studied Mr. Fox's speeches throughout this period, that, instead of so doing, he attempted only to show that England had not sufficient grounds to go to war with France; an argument which implies that the English Government struck the first blow, and that the French Government had not been the party to commence the strife.

Mr. Fox admitted that 'there was much in the French declaration of war that could not fairly be alleged as just cause of war,' and 'that many of the grounds stated were absurd.' Two only he could cite as, in his opinion, 'acts of hostility and provocation on the part of England. (1) The ordering the French Minister, M. Chauvelin, to depart the kingdom after the execution of the King; (2) 'The stopping the exportation of corn to France when it was allowed to other countries.' But Mr. Fox did not contend that these were acts of such unpardonable provocation that nothing short of war would redress them. M. Chauvelin had been accredited by

the French King; and when the Sovereign who thus sent him was actually put to death, he was no more than a private individual. His dismissal was not given to him in order to provoke or to insult the French Government, but because he was allying himself with the disaffected in England, and his presence was dangerous to our internal tranquillity. As for 'the stopping the exportation of corn and other articles to France,' although it may not have been a friendly act, it cannot be construed into a deadly provocation.

The fact was, Mr. Pitt was most anxious to escape having recourse to war, which he knew would defeat all those financial schemes which he had for years been devoting his mind to carry out; to say nothing of all those better feelings of humanity which made him shrink from the misery which all war unavoidably entails. On the other hand war, *as war*, was the policy of the French rulers; *not* war for this or that injury or provocation, but as a measure in the abstract *advantageous in itself to them*, and at which, by fair means or by foul, they were determined to arrive. Mr. Fox's case then depended for its establishment on his proving that the French Government was bent on peace, but that Mr. Pitt was bent on war; but he mainly relied on proving that the causes of complaint which England had against France were 'all objects of negotiation,' and such as, 'till satisfaction was explicitly de-
'manded, and refused, did not justify resorting to
'the last extremity;' a proposition which, if true, did not convict Mr. Pitt of causing the war, because it was France, not England, which resorted to that

last extremity, while Mr. Pitt was in the very act of carrying on negotiations to avert it. If Mr. Fox and his friends had not looked with a too friendly eye upon the 'new opinions,' they would never have taken so prejudiced a view as to impute to Mr. Pitt the having unnecessarily precipitated this country into the war.

The readiness with which Mr. Pitt entered into negotiations for peace, so soon as there appeared to him the slightest prospect of obtaining one which would be safe and honourable, must surely now be accepted as proof of his real anxiety to terminate the contest—a contest, respecting which he emphatically declared in Parliament, two years after its commencement, that 'this country was forced into it against its will.'

It was not till after the war had begun that Mr. Canning entered Parliament,* under the auspices of that statesman with whom (as he had some time before made known to his friend) 'his support and opinions would go if he were in Parliament.' How entirely he agreed with Mr. Pitt on the origin of the war, is shown by the following extract from another letter to the same friend, dated August 10, 1794:—

I cannot guess what are your doubts as to the sense of the word *injurious*, or its derivation. It comes, most unquestionably, from *injuria*, which is compounded of *in* and *jus*. Its sense obviously appears to be—first, *unjustly hurtful*; secondly, *hurtful*, simply without annexing the idea of

* In the spring of 1793. The declaration of war by France was February 1, 1793.

injustice, as we say, rain is injurious to ripe corn; thirdly, *abusive*, as we say, *injurious language*; but this, perhaps, is only because from such language some injury or hurt may arise to the person who receives it; fourthly, we say an *injurious* man, or rather we do *not* say usually, but might say so, meaning a man who is in the habit or capable of acting or speaking in such a manner as to *hurt* wilfully and unjustly.

The war is an *injurious* one, on the part of France *in sense four*; it is *injurious* to this country, in sense one; and may prove materially injurious to our prosperity, in sense two; but it would be very *injurious* to Ministers, in sense three, to accuse them of having occasioned it. This is all that strikes me as to the meaning of the word. I do not know Mr. —— of the Temple, for I cannot read his name as you have written it. I only hope he has not been *injurious* to you in any sense.

In the same letter he says:—

I do not pretend to disguise the dangers, or to solve the difficulties of our present political situation. That the war, as it stands at present, is most distressing is an assertion, than which nothing can be more true, except what appears to me almost to follow from it, that we must persevere some time longer in the war, if we would avoid not only distress, but destruction.

When this sentence was written, France, under the military guidance of Carnot, had been almost uniformly successful. Belgium had become an integral part of the French Republic; the British expedition had been driven from Holland, which country had been erected into a dependent Republic; Austria had been defeated on the Rhine, and the Sardinians had been expelled from Savoy; but these triumphs daunted neither Mr. Pitt nor his young admirer, and the sense of the danger to which the nation was then

exposed had resulted, not in strengthening Mr. Fox and his friends in their demand for peace, but in the strengthening the Minister by the former friends of Mr. Fox joining Mr. Pitt's Cabinet. On this junction of the Duke of Portland and others with Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning thus writes in this same letter:—

As to the present Cabinet, our short conversation when last we met in London will have put you in possession of my opinion, as I think it did me of yours. Of the purity of the motives upon which that Cabinet was founded, I have no doubt. Of the policy of forming it, I doubt much. By what I have been able to collect, however, the junction does not seem to be unpopular, and if it is *not*, all is well; for the most serious danger of all was losing, or impairing the confidence of the people. How do you find the part of the world in which you are disposed? I do not mean precisely *in the camp* (for militia officers, I suppose, are ready enough to condemn any measures which keep them in the way of the damps, &c.), but I mean in the *country* about you.

During the first three years that Mr. Canning was in Parliament, he took very little share in the debates. His first speech has already been noticed. On the opening of the session, December 30, 1794, he seconded the Address in an able speech, which served to confirm his reputation as a speaker; and he also spoke on the 25th of March, the following year, on Mr. Fox's motion for a Committee on the State of the Nation. But his comparative silence neither detracted from his reputation, nor diminished the high opinion which Mr. Pitt entertained of him; for he thus writes to his friend:—

My dear Boringdon, Oct. 9, 1795.

Upon the subject in question, I have nothing now to add to what I then communicated; I have indeed heard from Pitt

since that time, but I have heard nothing more than that he has much to say to me, if I can afford him an opportunity of saying it. This opportunity I mean to afford him by going up to town in about a fortnight, and I presume I shall then hear the particulars of the projected arrangement; whether any, and what delay is likely to intervene before it can be put in execution, and whether any, and what obstacles may have arisen to prevent its being put in execution at all. I confess I indulge a very sanguine hope that this last alternative may not be to be apprehended; whereat you will not wonder, agreeing as you do with me, that the office in question* is precisely that, which it would be most pleasant for me to have offered to my acceptance, and most useful to fill, as it is that which corresponds with my description of what I should prefer, and promises most fully to answer the purposes that determined my preference.

Ever yours affectionately,
GEORGE CANNING.

It was not, however, till the spring of the following year (1796) that he became Under-Secretary, with Lord Grenville for his chief; and, for the two succeeding years, his name only appears once in Hansard, and that prefixed to a very short speech. He was, however, devoting himself with earnestness to discharge his official duties, and the following letter shows how completely they occupied his attention:—

MY DEAR BORINGDON, London, Aug. 21, 1796.

I have not been in such a hurry to answer your letter, as you were in writing it; first, because I hold the writing of a letter just as the post is going out to be a pernicious habit, and one that I, in common with all well-disposed persons, am bound to do all in my power to discourage (and upon

* The Under-Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs.

this principle I have within these few days been obliged absolutely to send back a letter of Leveson,* in which he informed me that the post-bell was ringing, and *that* was *all*); and secondly, because I had the very day before I heard from you written to Morpeth† everything that I knew, and everything that was yet determined concerning the subject of your inquiry.

Nothing has occurred since that time to fix more certainly the meeting of Parliament for the day to which it now stands prorogued; and without some potent reason for it, it is not anybody's interest, nor can it, I should suppose, be anybody's wish, that it should meet so soon. My *opinion* is, that the meeting will take place some time about the first or second week in October, and this opinion is founded upon what was the opinion, the day before yesterday, of the person who is after all to decide the matter. When I see him again to-day I may perhaps find his *intentions* altered (though I am pretty sure his inclinations are not), and it must be confessed that there are half-a-dozen events within the verge of possibility, any one of which falling out immediately would render it nearly impracticable to postpone the meeting a day beyond the 15th of September. I have answered your question, I fancy, as little satisfactorily as you could desire. It is, however, fair at least, when I cannot settle your doubts, to make you a sharer of my own.

Are you busy in endeavouring to reconcile the good and bad news from Italy? or do you acquiesce calmly in the bad, having heard nothing of the good, which preceded it?

By despatches from Vienna, of the 7th inst., containing accounts from M. Wurmzer, of the 2nd, it appears that, on the two preceding days (the 31st July and the 1st of August), he had completely beaten the French army, and raised the siege of Mantua, killing or taking 10,000 men, and taking 140 pieces of cannon. So far is clear and certain; then come the French papers, taking up the story from the *revers*,

* Lord G. L. Gower, afterwards Earl Granville.

† Afterwards Lord Carlisle.

which they confess themselves to have *essuyé;* and describing their subsequent success—first, with some details of operations, none of which, however, it is to be observed, affect, in the smallest degree, the main body of Wurmzer's army, or come at all near or towards Mantua; and afterwards, with a general sweeping assertion of a *campagne finie en 5 jours,* &c. &c.; with loss of 15,000, or, as the *Moniteur* says, of 12,000 men, to the Austrians. Now, that this latter part sounds very dreadful is true; but, that the former authenticated victory of Marshal Wurmzer cannot go for nothing is equally so; and, when it is considered that the siege of Mantua—the avowed object of this part of the campaign on both sides—has terminated in favour of the Austrians, the whole of the besieging artillery of the enemy has fallen into their hands, for that I take to be the only way of making up the sum of 140 pieces of cannon; that the garrison of Mantua joined to the Austrian army, is sufficient to repair, in a great degree, the loss of that army, stated at its highest; and, finally, that not one of these circumstances, not the word *siege,* not the name *Wurmzer,* is mentioned by Buonaparte, or the Directory, I am inclined to hope, that the French accounts may be found considerably to have exaggerated the successes of the French, and to have lessened their defeats; or, what is more probable, that the two different accounts of the French and the Austrians speak of two different parts of the army; that while Wurmzer, on his side, succeeded in all his undertakings, Buonaparte, on the other side, has attacked, and completely cut to pieces, the corps of General Quadranovitch; that the two main armies have not yet met, or rather had not, when the last accounts came away, but were advancing towards each other, flushed with their partial advantages, to decide the campaign, indeed, by a general battle—a tremendous conflict, God knows, and upon the issue of which the fate of Europe depends.

I wonder what sort of times those must have been, when there were no armies to watch, no conflicts to apprehend, and when Europe had no fate depending. I fancy a summer passed in Downing-street must have been a very different

thing at such a period; and that I should hardly have got on, as I have now done, to the middle of August, I will not say without missing, or regretting the society which I have lost, certainly without any distressing impatience of my solitude. The happiness of constant occupation is infinite; the pleasanter, perhaps, to my feelings from its being more new to them, than, perhaps, it ought to have been. In the intervals of business there is not much variety of company to be found, it is true, but one sees a great deal of oneself—an intercourse which, in modesty, I ought to confess to be very dull, but which morality pronounces to be eminently improving.

Next to *that* person, the one of whom I see most, who is at least equally capable of communicating improvement, and from whom I am scarcely less willing to receive it, is *the* person that I have mentioned, early in this letter, as likely to determine the meeting, in a great measure, and, I hope I may add, the counsels, of Parliament. He is not, indeed, so close a prisoner in town as I am, but he seldom leaves town without giving me such a map of his proceedings as enables me to follow him, whenever I find, or can contrive for myself an evening of leisure—an advantage which I seldom fail to take whenever his destination is to Hollwood. I have seen him much there, and for the most part alone, and I think I have never left him without liking him better than before. I could not admire or love him more, even if I had no obligations to him; though, in that case, I should give a freer, because less suspicious testimony of the claims which, I think, he has to be both loved and admired.

Adieu! you will judge this to be one of my leisure days by the length which I have written. It is so; and I have to ride ten miles to my dinner at Lord Auckland's—for me, as you know, no small, and, as you may think, perhaps, no usual undertaking; but herein you would err grossly, for I am become a most vehement and pertinacious horseman, and, excepting that my bay mare starts, and my black gelding stumbles a little, and that my groom is just at this moment laid up, and has been so for these three weeks, with a hurt

which he got against the pummel of the saddle, I do not know any gentleman, for a young beginner, that is more handsomely mounted, and has his cavalry in better order.

Ever yours affectionately,

G. C.

This letter is given nearly *in extenso*, as it is a specimen of that seriousness mingled with fun, which marked the character of the man, and made the intercourse with him so agreeable to his familiar friends. It also shows the friendly footing he was on with Mr. Pitt.

The military operations to which the letter refers, were those when Buonaparte was obliged to raise the siege of Mantua, and when Lonato, with the French artillery, was taken by the Austrians—operations of sufficient importance to have been watched and scanned with intense anxiety at the period when they occurred, but the memory of which is comparatively lost in the succession of more gigantic contests which marked the following years. The treaty of Campo Formio—so disastrous to Austria, so apparently advantageous to France—was concluded in the autumn of 1797; and in the middle of the following November Buonaparte took his leave of the soldiers with whom he had won his Italian victories, and returned to Paris in the formidable character of 'the conqueror of Italy.' The boundaries of France had been extended, at this time, by the incorporation with her own territory of Belgium and Savoy; and her influence was enormously increased by the establishment of different republics skirting the conquered territories, over whom she threw what she called her 'protection.' But if France was thus victorious on land, England

was everywhere victorious by sea. Besides Lord Duncan's great victory, England had made herself master of all the colonies of France. These victories by sea and land, respectively gained by the contending nations, preserved the equilibrium of the war; and twice, when there appeared something like a chance of bringing it to a safe and honourable termination, Mr. Pitt opened negotiations with the French rulers—first at Paris, and afterwards at Lisle; but it was evident, from the demands insisted on by the French plenipotentiaries, that there was no real intention to make peace.

After these negotiations had been broken off, the Directory engaged themselves in preparing an army for the invasion of England, and Buonaparte was appointed to the command; but, ultimately, the hostile preparations which were avowedly intended against England, were turned in another direction, and the celebrated expedition against Egypt left the shores of France (May, 1798), under Buonaparte's command. In a short time, he made himself master of Egypt. Then came Nelson's glorious victory of the Nile, the defeat of Buonaparte at Acre by Sir Sidney Smith (the first defeat which he had ever experienced where he commanded in person), the battle of Aboukir, where he completely defeated the Turks, and lastly, the leaving his victorious army to his brother generals, and his own return to Paris.

During the early period of the absence of Buonaparte, in violation of every principle of good faith and international law, the French had made themselves

masters of the whole of Italy. The King of Sardinia and the King of Naples were driven from their Continental dominions; the Pope became an exile at Sienna; and Switzerland was conquered, and made subservient to France. These reckless and violent proceedings of the Directory raised up a spirit against them throughout Europe. Russia came into the field conjointly with Austria, and, under Suwarroff, bid fair to regain in the north of Italy the territories which Buonaparte had conquered. The French were made to recross the Rhine by the Austrians under the Archduke Charles; Belgium was in a state of insurrection, and Holland deeply discontented.

In France, the insurrection of the Chouans was a source of great disquietude to the Directory. The Directory itself was in a state of discord; it had undergone a change of members while Buonaparte was in Egypt, and none of its members were men of more than ordinary capacity. Discontent prevailed throughout France.

The position of affairs was thus materially changed from what it was at Buonaparte's departure. Before he started, when urged by his friends to make a dash at the supreme authority of the State, his answer invariably was, the 'pear is not yet ripe.' On his return, he saw that 'the pear' was so 'ripe,' that it only required a shake to insure its fall; accordingly, he resolved to give that shake on the 19th of Brumaire (November 9th). On that and the following day he shook the tree, and 'the pear' fell. He extinguished the Directory; he shut up the Council of Ancients; he drove the Council of Five Hundred out of their

place of assembly with the bayonets of his soldiers, and out of the ruins established a Consulate of Three, of which he was in reality the undoubted master.

By this stroke of power the Republic was to all intents and purposes annihilated. The Republican experiment had been tried, and it had failed.

Those who remember the deep sensation produced in this country by the downfall of Louis Philippe, or the still deeper one produced by that of Charles X., may be able to form some notion, but still a very imperfect and inadequate notion, of the intense excitement which was stirred up on this side of the water when any revolution took place in the Government of France. We were engaged in a deadly contest; its continuance, or its cessation mainly depended upon the character of the French Government, and of the men of whom it might be composed. But to Mr. Canning (as will be seen by the following letter) there was something even more important involved than the prolongation or termination of the war. The terrors of war were diminished a hundredfold by those victories, both great and small, which had secured to England the dominion of the seas. But the enduring triumph of the anarchical principles of Jacobinism was a living danger to the civilized world. A shout of exultation may well, therefore, have burst from Mr. Canning, when Buonaparte, who had been called 'the Child and Champion of Jacobinism,' dealt his parent a deadly blow.

We accordingly find Mr. Canning writing to his friend in the following strain:—

Nov. 19, 1799.

Huzza! huzza! huzza! for no language but that of violent, and tumultuous, and triumphant exclamation can sufficiently describe the joy and satisfaction which I feel at this complete overthrow and extinction of all the hopes of the proselytes to new principles. Buonaparte, an apostate from the cause of liberty—Buonaparte, the avowed tyrant of his country, is an object to be contemplated with enthusiasm—to be held up to the admiration and gratitude of mankind. Even Gifford shall adore him; and I care not much what his object may be. I would rather, to be sure, that he meant to be a Monck; but if he will be a Cæsar, it is enough; and if he falls, like Cæsar, by and bye, so much the better. Tell not me that he will make France more powerful—that he will make war with more vigour, or peace with more dexterity than the exploded Directory have done; I care not—war we can brave, and from peace, I hope, we shall have the spirit to save ourselves; and as to power, I would give France India to insure her a despotism, and think the purchase a cheap one. No! no! it is the thorough destruction of the principles of exaggerated liberty—it is the lasting ridicule thrown upon all systems of democratic equality—it is the galling conviction carried home to the minds of all the brawlers for freedom in this and every other country, that there never was, nor will be, nor can be, a leader of a mob faction, who does not mean to be the lord, and not the servant, of the people. It is this that makes the name of Buonaparte dear to me—this his one act has done, let him conduct himself as he may hereafter; let him be a general, or a legislator, or a monarch, or a captive, crowned or beheaded, it is all the same for this purpose. Buonaparte may flourish, but the idol of Jacobinism is no more.

If this be a war against opinions, as the Jacobins here are fond of saying, and if the opinions against which war was waged were these—that France might be a republic; that a republican government was applicable to a large territory and multiplied population; that a government, founded on such damned principles as those of the French Revolution,

could stand (I say nothing of the happiness of the people under them, but simply state the question of the possibility of such a government standing—enduring at all); if such was the war, and such the enemy, never was war so successful, never was enemy so utterly subdued.

Opinions such as these, who, in the devil's name, will hold them now? France a free Republic! Where is Sir Lionel Copley to maintain this proposition? *crevé* like Rewbell, I presume: or convinced sullenly, as I am rapturously, and with all my heart and soul both convinced myself, and desirous to convince others; and to extort the unwilling avowal from the teeth of the Jacobins, that henceforth with regard to France, and the principles of France, or to any country similarly circumstanced as to extent, population, manners, &c., *Republican* and *Fool* are synonymous terms.

If the extinction of the first Revolutionary Republic by the iron hand of Buonaparte afforded an example of the wisdom of the views which the above letter contains, the more recent and not less unsuccessful attempt to maintain in France a republican form of Government, furnishes yet another proof that 'there never was, nor will be, nor can be a leader of a mob-faction, who does not mean to be the lord, and not the servant, of the people.'

CHAPTER V.

LETTER OF THE FIRST CONSUL TO GEORGE III.—THE REPLY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT—MR. CANNING'S VINDICATION OF THE USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE REPLY.

FOUR days after the date of the letter quoted at the end of the preceding chapter, Mr. Canning wrote a letter containing the following extract to another college friend, with whom also he was on terms of close intimacy:—

Nov. 23, 1799.

Now as to the third point, and that which takes up so much the largest part of your letter. You will have found that I have not looked at the probable consequences to us of the late happy events in Paris in the same light in which they have appeared to you in the solitude of Winchester, and amidst the wrecks of your military grandeur; that I do not agree with you as to the almost '*certainty*' of a proposal for peace (if the new French Government are as much wiser than their predecessors as I take them to be), but that I see none of the embarrassment from rejecting the proposal which seems to alarm you, provided our Government has the wisdom and consistency to act up to its own long-professed policy, and the sense and spirit to speak out boldly to the nation. If there ever was any meaning in the assertion that the nature and disposition of the French Government ought to be taken into account for something, when we were weighing the propriety of making, or accepting overtures for peace; if the insincerity and the instability of the Republican Directory have been maintained in argument, and proved in fact, till the whole of this country, even those who were most clamor-

ous for the trial and most anxious for the success of the Paris and Lisle negotiations, are not only convinced of their reality, but are congratulating themselves on having escaped the mischiefs, in the event of peace having been concluded; surely there cannot easily be built up any plausible theory which shall make the name of Siéyes operate as a charm against the suspicion of insincerity, or shall attach the attribute of stability to a form of government, founded on the recent violation of every principle to which Frenchmen were supposed to be devoted, and professing itself to be only for a time. I think this sort of argument perfectly untenable; and I should recommend a course founded on arguments directly the reverse, even if there were nothing in the character of the last change in France which held out reasonable hopes of a consummation in that country being near at hand, such as, at all periods of the Revolution, one had a right to expect must some time or other be accomplished; such as the whole course of history authorizes us to believe is now likely to follow in the ordinary course of events. I partake in the truth of —— sanguine disposition. I do expect the establishment of despotism in France—most anxiously do I expect it, and most fervently do I pray for it. Who will be the despot in the first instance, whether Siéyes or Buonaparte, —— may have better information than I have; and through this establishment, I do look for the ultimate restoration of the monarchy (at how near a period I again leave —— to determine) in some one individual of the exiled family. I believe all this; but if you doubt it, I will not now undertake to establish your conviction. It will be time enough to talk it over when we meet, and I hope we shall yet meet in the country. I have, indeed, written to Pitt (I was writing to him when I received your letter, and in what I had said till then I really had not adverted to the possibility of a difference of opinion, either in Government or the public, as to the immediate or unqualified rejection of all proposal for treaty from the Consulate at this moment; but your letter showed me the possibility of such a notion, as you wished to inculcate into my mind, and I therefore did add

to what I had written) a request that he would call me up to town instantly, if the proposals, which I took it for granted he would soon receive, seemed likely to lead (which I took it for granted they would not) to any difficulty, or even discussion.

The proposal which Mr. Canning 'took for granted' Mr. Pitt would soon receive, arrived before the close of the year; but it was addressed directly to the King, by Buonaparte himself, and in so doing the First Consul set aside one of those forms which are essentials in a Constitutional Monarchy. It may seem to some a matter of no real importance, whether this communication were made directly to the King, or whether it were made through the medium of the King's Minister; but if it be fitting that the Sovereign should receive such a communication without the interposition of a Minister, there can be no reason why the Sovereign should not deal with it on his own authority. The desire for peace, expressed by Buonaparte in this letter, is highly praiseworthy; and if the British Ministers could have looked upon the document as expressing his honest and genuine sentiments, they doubtless would have profited by the opening thus made for negotiation. But they considered it their duty to judge of it, not so much by what was actually professed, as by the whole course of the proceedings of those who had successively attained to power in France since the overthrow of the Monarchy, and more especially by the antecedents of the individual himself from whom the letter came. Looking then to the fact that similar 'professions had been repeatedly held out by all those who had successively directed the resources of France to the de-

struction of Europe;'* looking at the career of Buonaparte from its commencement, deeming that, for the maintenance of that power, which he had just usurped, war was essential, because one who had 'placed his 'whole reliance upon military support could not afford 'to let his military renown pass away, his laurels 'wither, and the memory of his deeds sink into 'obscurity;'† thinking that, although war was thus essential to him, yet that he might still derive advantage from carrying on negotiations for peace; considering that the recent successes in Italy of the Russians and Austrians, during Buonaparte's absence in Egypt, and like discomfiture of the French expedition to that country, gave the then state of affairs a more cheering aspect, the British Government declined to accede to the overtures for negotiating, thus offered by Buonaparte. How cordially Mr. Canning approved of this decision may be seen indirectly from the following letter, which relates to the answer of the British Government:—

Spring Gardens, Jan. 3, 1800.

My dear Boringdon,

I am so far from feeling out of humour with you, for having stated the objections that occur to you upon the use of our native language in a matter of such high moment, as a declaration of the King's sentiments in relation to peace and war, that I really am much obliged to you for having suggested to me (I think) all the possible objections that can be made to this improvement in diplomacy, and thus enable me to anticipate them, from the quarters whose hostility is not limited to the language, but extends to all the institutions of the country.

I must begin by answering the last sentence of your letter,

* Answer of Lord Grenville.

† Mr. Pitt's speech, Feb. 3, 1800.

both because truth obliges me to disclaim a merit to which I have no pretensions, and because my argument may perhaps gain more credit with you when you find that I am not defending a work of my own. I *found* the declaration written in the language in which it now stands. I have no share in the praise of having been true to the dignity of the country in this respect, except so far as may result from having often and often expressed my sincere wish for the alteration which is now made, and made I hope for ever: from having adopted it long ago, in the only diplomatic paper that I ever drew up, the first of the kind, perhaps, that was ever written in English (but for that I claim no great thanks, as I could not have written it in French), and from having expressed in the strongest terms my most unqualified approbation of it in the present instance.

Your objections appear to be of three sorts: *first*, that it is an innovation in point of form; for that this is the first time that we have used the English language *versus* France. *Secondly*, that it gives the usurper an advantage in translating our answer into the Corse or French tongue, whichever he may use on this occasion, or in his general government of France. *Thirdly*, that as we used French in the former negotiations, we ought (even if the alteration in itself were otherwise proper) to use it in this refusal to *negotiate*.

On all and each of these points I differ from you. First, it is not, strictly speaking, an innovation in point of form, though it is in point of practice. I use these words in opposition to each other; because, though sometimes confounded, nothing can be more essentially different than the two things are from each other. *Forms* have their origin in *right*, *practice* in *convenience*; *forms* are the observances *due* to *others*, in return for their observances paid to you, which cannot be infringed without giving just cause of offence; *practice* is the course which convenience (generally our own convenience) has originally dictated to us, and which, whenever that convenience cease, we may discontinue without asking anybody's leave. Nothing can be more evident than that the French never could of *right* claim that any other nation should use their

language, and they, therefore, have no sort of pretence to be offended if the use of it is at any moment discontinued. It was, on our part, matter of practice and convenience purely: it was strictly speaking in *violation* of *form*, the principle of which is equal mutual concession, or an equal mutual departure from equal rights between equals; and it is a practice which, whenever the convenience ceases, or when we choose to fancy it ceases, we have a perfect right to alter. The French have no reprisals to make; they already do their worst by writing in their own tongue, and they can do no more (they may make this *worse*, still worse, by vitiating their language by revolutionary phrases; but that is their own business, and does not enter into the argument). It is certainly our business to understand, or to get construed to us whatever they send to us in French; and so on, *vice versâ*, is their duty with regard to us.

Neither is this in point of fact our first deviation from practice in this respect even with regard to France; the declaration against Spain is a much stronger instance in its way, if the Spaniards had, as I believe they had, declared in French, which is the acknowledged and rightful medium between us and them (I am not sure of this fact, however, I am only sure that we never saw the Spanish declaration in Spanish, and did not trouble ourselves to know whether the French was a translation of the original); but with regard to France, our declaration after the reception of the negotiations at Lisle, the last diplomatic act of this Government with regard to France, was written in English. It was written *at* France rather than *to* France, but this was only because our intercourse with France was closed; it was addressed in some sort to all the rest of Europe, and was in this respect therefore a violation of *form* to a certain degree (for all the rest of Europe have a right to expect the use of the established common language of Europe from us to them); but be it remembered, it was intended for the people of this country more than all, and it is at least one duty of the sovereign to speak intelligibly to his people. This is a matter in which both right and convenience prescribe the form, and

I trust, will, now that it is begun, for ever maintain the practice.

It is so far, therefore, from being an absolutely new thing to use English *versus* France, that in the present instance we should be contradicting our last recorded act should we do otherwise.

So much, therefore, for the principle of our conduct. Now as to the policy and the propriety of adopting it (if right in itself) on the present occasion.

Your second objection is founded on the advantage which, you apprehend, the tyrant of France will have in translating our declaration for his subjects.

Now I beg you to consider what are the misrepresentations of which you are afraid, what is his interest in making them, and what is the extent to which he can carry them in a translation beyond that to which he might go in garbling, or suppressing an original?

You mean, I presume, that he will represent us to the French people as less pacific than we really mean to be. Good; is it his interest to do so? Our objections to treaty are pointed distinctly at *his* government. We declare our willingness to treat when we can treat safely. We name *one* form of government, the mere establishment of which in France would of *itself* afford us safety in treating, remove every obstacle to peace, and leave moreover untouched the *integrity of France*. But, we add, that it is not to this mode only that we mean to limit the possibility of pacification, that we claim no right to prescribe a form of government, nor to point out the individual to whom the powers assumed by the present ruler of France ought to be entrusted. That there may be many other ways in which the security which we require may be obtained, and that the moment such a way is opened to us we are ready to proceed by it. What is there in all this, that if he gives it at all to the French nation, he can give in any such way as to alter the impression that it is to *him* and *his* government we give no trust; that there is *one* form of government (differing not in form or in principle, except for the better, but in the person of one

man only, from that to which France has submitted herself), which would give them peace instantly, and on good terms; and that there may be many others, but that Buonaparte's, *as it now stands*, is not one of them? He may indeed suppress this in the whole or in part. He may publish what is said about royalty, omitting what follows, or (which would be much more politic in him) he may suppress what is said about royalty altogether, lest connected with peace and integrity of territory, and contrasted with his tyranny and war, it should be *too tempting*. He may add an 's' to 'ruler,' to try to throw off from himself the odium of a monarchy; but what is there in all this that he might not equally curtail, omit, or add, in an original French paper as well as in a translation?

Besides, in the royalist provinces, where it is most material to have a true version, Buonaparte's translations will not find their way so fast as ours will. And as to Foreign Courts, they will receive our translation at the same time with an original, and both will be delivered to the Foreign Ministers here by the time at which they can reach Paris.

Thirdly, as to the propriety or *taste* of choosing the present occasion for writing in our own language, having written in the course of former negotiations in French. Now as to *taste*, I really can give no opinion. The *taste* of one's intercourse with the republic of Algiers would be just as much a matter of moment with me as with the republic of France, in both of which I should respect equally, and with precisely the same claim to consideration on their parts, the right originating from the peculiar principles of their Constitutions to be treated with distinction and delicacy. But as to the *propriety* of taking this opportunity when we did not take others (which were not opportunities), I know no man who would have been so forward as yourself to exclaim against the folly of hazarding *substance* by even an adherence to old forms, much more the adoption of new ones, however in themselves to be approved and admired. A proposition for peace, couched in a language the use of which you would have contended to be offensive, might have been absurd (I do not admit that it would have been, but I grant it for the sake of

argument); but to *refuse* treating in unpleasant language has at least nothing *inconsistent* in it, it is at least suiting the word to the action; it cannot be stated to contradict the matter by the manner, and to risk the losing a beneficial object by the tone in which we ask it. But once begun, in this instance, whatever we may have to say hereafter, be it high or humble, soothing or threatening, warlike or pacific, I trust we shall never again submit to speak any language but our own.

There are, however, yet other reasons arising out of the peculiar circumstances of the case, which justify and even prescribe the course which has now been taken; and which would not have justified it on the same grounds in any former exchange of communication with France.

In all former instances the French Government have adhered strictly and scrupulously to the established forms in their writings to us, whatever their proceedings may have been; the present despot chooses to set himself above them, and it is therefore right and called for, that we should set him down again, so far as anything of this kind can do it. What business had he to write directly to the King in a matter that must be treated with his Minister? You will say crowned heads do so, and the *Corse* has a right to fancy that he has a crown to his head, like another; but this is not true as to the present case. A King of France, or an Emperor of Germany, might, indeed, write to the King, but his letter would be a matter of form and of supererogation. The letter of business would come from his Minister to Lord Grenville. The tyrant in question chooses another mode; he presumes to talk of transacting business directly in confidence with the King; he fancies that, because he is absolute in France, our good King will act as if he was so here. But we show him the difference. This letter is very properly treated with silence, and answered only by an official declaration, in the third person. Nay, still more, if he *were* an emperor, as he fancies himself, his letter to the King would still be informal and insolent. An emperor (if a gentleman born) would write to the King, on such an extraordinary

occasion, IN HIS OWN HAND, and would sign with some term of respect. The adventurer's letter is in a clerk's hand, and signed (*de votre Majesté*), your Majesty's Buonapartę. It is evident his head is turned. It is for our conduct to cure the vertigo. Do not answer me, that he is newly come to the throne, and therefore may have sinned through ignorance. Do not answer me, that these are, after all, trifling omissions or errors—that forms are nothing, and substance all; because if you do, I shall retort upon you, that then our variation (not of form, but) of practice is nothing either, that substance in our case is all too (God be praised the substance is something); and that the same advisers who may tell him now that he is treated with disrespect would have been able, if consulted, to have taught him how to behave respectfully to the King of Great Britain. I therefore think the use of our own native English tongue at all times, and under all circumstances, *right*, in the present instance peculiarly politic, and, in answer to the letter which has produced it, unavoidable; and I pray that it may never be disused again. The rest I will talk over with you at dinner.

Ever yours affectionately,

G. C.

This is the first letter of those from which quotations have been made, which seems to indicate that Mr. Canning meant it to serve as a record hereafter of his opinions upon the points which it discusses. It is given in full, and it will have been seen that it relates to nothing else, save the intention to 'talk the rest over at dinner.' Had he designed it *only* to satisfy his friend, he would not have taken the trouble to write so long a letter, when an immediate opportunity presented itself for discussing its subject-matter. To the day of his death, he retained the opinion that it was both right and fitting to employ our own language in State papers issued by the Government.

On the 3rd of February, this correspondence with the First Consul and his Minister was made the subject of a very interesting and animated debate in the House of Commons. Mr. Canning, with admirable skill, replied to Mr. Erskine.* Mr. Pitt, in a speech of wonderful eloquence and ability, explained and justified the course which the Government had taken; and Mr. Fox began a speech which extends over eight-and-thirty closely printed pages (as persons intending to deliver a very long harangue too frequently do), with saying that, 'he was sure, at so late an 'hour of the night, Mr. Speaker would do him the 'justice to believe that he did not mean to go at length 'into the discussion of this great question.' That this preliminary promise, however, was not fulfilled, was probably by no means regretted by the persons who heard him, as assuredly it cannot be by those who now read his speech. At this distance of time, when matters of this kind can be examined with coolness and impartiality, the speech of Mr. Fox must be considered as a marvellous specimen of oratorical ability. It comes upon the reader in all the more striking way after Mr. Pitt's. The Minister seems to have so clearly established the wisdom of his views, that, when we arrive at the end, we feel that the topic must be exhausted, and that human ingenuity must, indeed, be at a loss to find even any plausible argument to reply to it. But Mr. Fox pours forth a stream of argument and eloquence, placing every point in a totally different aspect; and his remarks are so fresh and powerful, that the reader almost feels that he ought

* Afterwards Lord Chancellor.

to have been right; so that he closes the report of the debate, in doubt which of the two statesmen has arrived at the wisest conclusion. In this state of doubt any person might well now remain, were it not that the wisdom of the two opposite courses recommended was tested by subsequent events. Within two years the British Government *did* negotiate with Buonaparte, and *did* agree to enter into a treaty of peace with him—with what advantage, or with what disadvantage, to this country, will be considered in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

LETTER FROM MR. CANNING ON HIS OWN OFFICIAL PROSPECTS —RETIREMENT OF MR. PITT—LETTER ON THE ADDINGTON ADMINISTRATION, AND PEACE OF AMIENS.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1799, when there seemed not to be the slightest prospect of the breaking up of Mr. Pitt's Administration by any political events, a probability appears to have arisen that Mr. Dundas,* who was then Home Secretary of State, would be desirous to resign that office. Mr. Canning had then been six years in Parliament, and five in the subordinate office of Under-Secretary; and naturally, from the active part which he had taken, and the influence which he had exercised, he was beginning to think that the time was approaching when he might fairly claim to fill a more responsible post. To jump at once from an Under-Secretaryship to a Secretaryship of State, was what, however, he could even then hardly expect; still, in the days of an Administration which had lasted for sixteen years, and whose age had given a sort of permanency to the holdings of office by those of whom it was composed, any change seemed likely to be a change for years, as years might elapse before any new opening might occur.

In the frame of mind which these circumstances

* Afterwards Lord Melville.

were calculated to engender, Mr. Canning sought the counsel of two of his friends, as to the advisability of his taking some step with Mr. Pitt for his own advancement. To one of them he says (November 23, 1799):—

Consult together and consider all the motives which have induced me to entertain the idea at all. You must not, however, think that I wish to *procure* the resignation of D.'s Secretaryship of State, in order that I may be a candidate to succeed him. Just the contrary: I would *much rather that he* should keep it *till I grow* bigger, and, in the meantime, give up that* which would benefit me now, which I should get without difficulty, and without creating any surprise, and which might pave the way to the greater arrangement, in its own good time, some years hence. The alternative, therefore, is not between my taking this step, or waiting quietly for a *certain* specified result; but the question is, as to the expediency of my endeavouring, in time, to lay the ground for my profiting by it. Do you fear shocking the public? I do. Pitt? I do not.

To the other friend (Lord Boringdon) Mr. Canning writes what follows, where he unreservedly discloses the secret workings of his mind; and if the workings of any man's mind can ever be accurately traced, they never can be so more surely than through his unreserved and familiar intercourse with his intimate confidential friends. It is this which constitutes the great value of the letters from which such large quotations have been made. They reveal the real nature of the man; and it is no small benefit to a nation, when it can be shown of one who has taken a very large share in the political events of his day, by the

* Treasurership of the Navy.

revelations of his inmost soul, that his public conduct was not more deserving of fame than his secret motives were patriotic and pure.

The letter is dated November 28, 1799.

I think I collect from your last statement of your opinion, that if there were any diminution of the chance of inferior vacancies, you would recommend the measure in question, bold (perhaps rash and presumptuous) as it appears to you. Now this is the very thing which I apprehend. I think it by no means improbable that the first vacancy which will occur may be the highest, and that (happen what may in the interval), *that* may be put off till the end of the session. Even supposing a lesser vacancy to occur in the meantime, I think the greater will still take place; perhaps at no more distant time, which would, even in that case, be a matter of serious grievance to me, if any other person, not already in the natural course of succession above me, were to fill it; for, through whatever gradations I may pass to it, I think you will agree with me that *there* is the point at which, *at some time or other*, I must endeavour to arrive. I had much rather that it should not be too suddenly opened. I had no suspicion, till about a month ago, that it was likely to be so; but once opened, whoever occupies it will probably maintain himself in possession of it for a series of years. And then look round upon the other posts of public importance and (what I know you will give me credit for feeling still more strongly) public utility; see how sturdily they are manned, and tell me what chance I ever have of being placed in a situation in which (whatever may be its rank or emolument, or whatever consideration I may contrive to attract by House of Commons' service) I can, in respect to the real effective business of the country, be any other than a private, unavowed, and irresponsible adviser—a situation which has all the anxiety which belongs to office, without the activity and exertion which serve to lighten that anxiety, and to turn it to advantage; and all the invidiousness which belongs to power, without the means of defending itself, or

the consolation of doing good to others; a situation in which (to sum up all its discomforts and disgraces in one word) one may have laboured half a year to rouse a proper spirit, and to confirm a just determination, upon such a question as that of the Slave Trade, and then have the mortification of having all one's hopes overthrown with impunity by a speech and a canvass of Lord Westmorland.

You must not suppose that I am insensible to the danger and to the impolicy of shocking public opinion, still less that I would willingly hurt the feelings of one individual, who could justly consider their rights to be invaded, or their fair claims overlooked, in my promotion. Of the three who are immediately *before* me, two would, I have good reason to believe, peremptorily decline the office, if proposed to them; the third, whose claims are certainly indisputable, if he chooses to press them, might be inclined to take it, unless such an arrangement could be contrived as would satisfy him in some other manner.

As to the public, if age were the point most liable to objection, in the first place it might be very possible, the business being once determined, to adjourn the execution of it beyond even the end of the session—to the end of the Parliament perhaps—by which time that objection would be much softened, if not done away. And, I confess, supposing no other impediment, I should think it a little hard that in times certainly not remarkable for tardy rise in any of the professions of this country, or in any other countries in the world, that when, in so many instances in politics, those who fill the highest situations have all risen to them at an early time of life, and have not filled them the less usefully (I do not mean to quote Pitt of course—he is a *monster* of talents, that cannot be drawn into a precedent, but I might mention, without too much arrogance, Lord Castlereagh, now two years Minister of Ireland; the Speaker,* soon after thirty, placed in a chair which was supposed, of all other things, to require *years* to fill it; Lord Grenville, *before*

* Addington.

that age, Speaker and Secretary of State); it would, I say, be a little hard that, amidst all these instances of early advancement, *one* person should be selected as a victim to ancient prejudice; should be required to go through all the forms, to keep all his terms regularly, and to advance only step by step, till he should arrive at the objects of ambition in a green old age; and I should feel a little impatient if I were to be that person.

Again, however, I am aware that the public does not judge by general rules; and that what in one, or in forty instances, might be borne without a murmur, in another single instance might, one scarcely knows why, excite a very general disapprobation. How far this would be likely to be the case with regard to myself, I am the last person to be able rightly to determine. And upon this point, therefore, it is a real office of friendship to tell me exactly what you think. Do so. And tell me, at the same time, how far you think such a prejudice (supposing it to exist) ought to weigh with me. I cannot but know that, at a much earlier period of my life, I have had much prejudice to combat, perhaps with the public, certainly in the House of Commons, as must naturally be the lot of any man, who begins a political life in turbulent times, with offending and defying a large and powerful faction, and a faction, at that time, however low in political influence, certainly in possession of the public mind in a great degree, and certainly considered as almost infallible in their judgment, respecting the talents and pretensions even of their opponents. But this prejudice I do think, in the House of Commons at least, I have conquered. If I am right in this belief, recollect under what disadvantages I have fought against it; and then judge whether I am too sanguine in imagining that by a similar conduct (whatever this conduct may have been, for I protest I could not state any one thing that I have done, or any one word that I have said, except in acting up as well as I could to the strict line of my duty in public life, or of what I thought conscientiously right in private, to soften or conciliate any human being, and so far from being a promoter of *middle measures* and kind words,

I have at all times exhausted myself in endeavours to give more vigour and sharpness to political hostility, and more decision, and scorn of compromise to every action of Government; being, at all times, since I have had a share in public transactions, convinced that our enemies were such as could be reclaimed only by being crushed, and our cause one which must finally triumph, if clearly and unequivocally defined, and firmly and invariably maintained *up to* the truth)—by these same means, aided, as in this case they would be, by all that they have wanted hitherto—by the right to advise, and power to act, and authority to explain and to defend, but, above all, by the ability to do *real good*, may I not, without too great presumption, imagine, that whatever prejudice might, in this instance, be excited against me, I should conquer with less difficulty and in less time?

I am arguing all this with you as if it were perfectly ascertained that I have only to resolve to take the measure in question to insure its success. I am not, however, so sanguine as to imagine this; but, in truth, while I am arguing it with you, I am not only settling my own mind (which is yet far from being entirely made up) as to the propriety of making the attempt, but am weighing and trying, in your judgment as well as my own, the arguments by which I mean to support the statement of my project to Pitt.

He, I am confident, will be guided in his decision by the double motive of what he thinks most kind and most essentially advantageous to me, and what he thinks most beneficial to the public service. And I declare (and you will believe me), that I would not wish him to decide upon the former of these motives, if he were not, in his own judgment, persuaded that the latter went along with it.

It would be unpardonable if I were to go as much at length into this second part of the subject as I have, without scruple, into that which more immediately concerns myself; and in which, without many phrases, I take for granted that you feel a real and lively interest. I will, however, state shortly the outline of one or two material considerations. At the peace, whenever it comes, the present functions of

the third Secretary of State will be in a great measure determined. But it is not for the public service (I speak not here lightly, but in sober seriousness)—it is not for the public service that the number of respectable and *efficient* House of Commons' offices should be diminished, especially at a moment when (according to my view of the state of this country, and the view which I am happy to say Pitt takes of it) more will be to be done internally in the revision of *almost all* our establishments—some, perhaps (but I think comparatively few), for the purpose of alteration; others, as God reviewed 'the different works of creation,' to see that 'they are good'—than ever was to be done at any former period, or than ever any former Government took the trouble to do. Do you imagine that the Home Secretary (such as he is at present) would be a sufficient assistant to Pitt in a revision of this sort? But if the office is continued, it must have some specific business for its department. Right; and that business should be Ireland. The Union will, by the time of which we are talking, have been made; but it will have been made by Irishmen, who will endeavour (I do not say this as blaming them; though I think it is a mischievous and mistaken policy, it is a natural one, but depend upon it they will endeavour) to keep as much as possible of the administration of the executive government of that kingdom in Dublin. This must not be; it is English government, acting immediately upon Ireland, not refracted through a local Cabinet or Committee, that must do for Ireland all that is to be done there; and if, as I said before, England must be revised in most of her establishments, what part of Ireland do you imagine there is upon which a good and fairly-intentioned Government will not be bound to bestow a careful, and constant, and patient watchfulness, an unwearied spirit of inquiry and reform?

Adieu, yours,

G. C.

P.S.—Since I wrote this letter this morning I have received yours of Monday. The whole of what I have been writing stands good, and requires no addition. Except, indeed,

that I have a remark to make which applies equally to both your letters, which is, that they are both above the proper weight, and were charged, not above their value, but yet *very* high. Fleming will bring in a bill to you for them.

Whether Mr. Canning ever made the representation to Mr. Pitt which he was contemplating in this letter, or whether, if made, it met with acquiescence, the author has no means of knowing. It is certain, however, that it had no results. But this want of knowledge diminishes nothing of the real value of the letter; it is not the effect produced by the contemplated representation which is of importance, but the temper and disposition of the writer indicated by the nature of its contents.

The man who 'endeavours to give more vigour and 'sharpness to political hostility, and more decision and 'scorn of compromise to every action of Government' —who looks to the 'final triumph' of his 'cause,' by its being clearly 'and unequivocally defined, and firmly and invariably maintained *up to the truth*,' must be a man who has a deep inward conviction that the 'cause' which he has espoused, and which he thus fearlessly advocates, is the 'cause' of truth. Throughout the letter (revealing, as it does, confidence in his own principles, and a fair personal ambition) yet does he, with evident sincerity, declare that to the public good his own ambition and advancement ought to be subservient. These were not mere expressions, as of course, to exhibit his modesty; on the contrary, they were deep-rooted *principles*, on which, through life, he religiously acted, and of which, within little more than a year, he gave a practical example. For when, in consequence of circumstances connected with

the 'Catholic question,' Mr. Pitt resigned* his high office, Mr. Canning at once resigned his own office of Under-Secretary of State.

That he deeply regretted quitting office at a time when the struggle with France continued in all its intensity, is true, and natural. That he should have witnessed with impatience the management of that fearful contest withdrawn from the hands of him whom he thought was the only man then alive who was equal to conducting it, and that that impatience should have been greatly increased by seeing the direction of that contest confided to the feeble powers of Mr. Addington, is only what was to be expected.

When, therefore, Mr. Pitt, on retiring, advised Mr. Canning not to follow his example—advice which it was quite honest and legitimate for Mr. Pitt to give, with his views regarding Mr. Addington—Mr. Canning hesitated not a moment in rejecting it. With his feelings and opinions, it was a course which it was *impossible* for him to follow. He was one of those politicians whose minds are so constituted that, having strong convictions, they are wholly incapable of acting against them. No personal aggrandizement—no official distinction—could tempt Mr. Canning to endure the anguish which the promotion of measures of which he disapproved would have inflicted on him. The incapacity to tamper with conscience in political matters, is one of the noblest virtues with which a statesman can be endowed. It is an essential element of true greatness: if a statesman be destitute of it,

* Feb. 1801.

however transcendant may be his talents, his knowledge, and his skill, he never can be truly great. This is the one lesson which these pages are designed to teach, by showing how Mr. Canning's life was a glorious illustration of it.

Mr. Addington was not more than four months in office before he opened negotiations with Buonaparte for peace. They resulted in the signature of preliminaries on the 10th of October, 1801, which gave to the new Government more of the appearance of stability than it had before assumed. Some of Mr. Canning's admirers began to grow uneasy at his continued exclusion from office; and it appears that one of them gave him advice on the subject, which, by the way in which he dealt with it, it is evident was extremely distasteful to him. He thus comments on it.

Ashbourne, Oct. 29, 1801.

MY DEAR BORINGDON,

——'s letter to you has laid me under the necessity of pointing out the difference which subsists between his opinion and mine, or of acquiescing in his notion of our agreement on points upon which, while he continues to think as he professes to do, I am afraid we never can agree.

So far we certainly agree, that to have taken office at the time, and in the manner prescribed by Pitt, would have been (to use his own expressions) *ruinous*. We agree, too, in thinking that there is perhaps no *physical* impossibility (I mean no allusion) in Addington and my, some time or other, acting in the same Government; in my acting '*under*' him if he will, so far as Addington's continuing in the situation which he now holds, makes any other office in the Government, in one sense, subordinate, though I think this event much less probable than —— seems to do. But that the peace, which Addington has thought fit to accept (for it would be a calumny to suppose him, or any other man in the

country capable of offering it), makes this event more desirable than it was, we certainly do not agree. And as to the means by which —— thinks it must be, and *ought* to be brought about on my part, we differ to a degree which renders it really painful to me to state our difference as broadly as I feel it. The sentiments which —— expresses, and the line which he chalks out for me, are so entirely the reverse of anything that I am inclined to adopt or to pursue, that I have sometimes thought for a moment that he was only trying me, that he was putting an exaggerated case of baseness and duplicity, in order to see whether a summer out of office had so far subdued me as that I should be too happy by this time to exchange freedom of thought, and consistency of speech, for the most distant chance of rendering myself agreeable to Mr. Addington. What the hard weather may do, when it sets in, I cannot answer for; but as yet, I assure him, I am not so broken, and so ready to abjure, what he is good enough to allow to be, 'my nature and my habits.' When, after stating in undisguised terms, the 'constant suppression of what is passing in one's own mind,' and though 'expressing, both in public and private, good-will and esteem, when no such sentiments are felt,' as the rudiments of the system which he recommends, he, in the next page, qualifies this system as that which an upright and 'honourable mind' *must* 'embrace,' I cannot help thinking that he pushes the irony as far as it will go.

If he ask me, how then am I to arrive at the objects of my ambition? I answer, that the putting this question in that shape is a proof that we misunderstand each other, and look at the subject before us in a very different point of view. I must act as I think right. My road must be through *character* to power; that I may take this road and miss the end, is very possible; nay, that by acting as I think right, I may not, as surely as I expect it, get even to my second stage—character—is very possible also; but *that* I cannot help; I will try no other course; and I am sanguine enough to believe that, after all, this course, though not perhaps the quickest, is the surest. ——'s reasoning would

be just on the question which I suppose him to ask (he does ask it in effect, but not in terms), and very apposite, if what he mentions in his letter as an imputation likely to be incurred, by taking office at present, 'blunder in speculation,' were indeed the true description of my motives of action last spring; but I imagined him to be better aware of the truth, and I did not therefore expect from him, nor can comprehend, a rule of conduct, which would only be consistent, *if* in fact I did then act upon such motives, or if I had since repented of the motives upon which I acted. I have not. At this moment I congratulate myself more than ever, that I did not take office either at that time or since. In subordinate office, could I have supported this treaty? In Hawkesbury's situation could I have signed it? I would have cut off my right hand rather.

But 'how then are Addington and I ever to come together?' That is *his* business, not mine; whenever he chooses to have me, he will ask; but if he takes me, be it when it may, he shall take me for what I am, not for anything that I will endeavour to seem. But is it likely that Addington will ever under any circumstances make an offer of such a situation as alone I am disposed to accept (from him), to a person so little kindly disposed to him, or who thinks so slightly of his talents? I really do not know. It is a question which —— must put to him if he wants information upon it; but if he wants to hear the precise state of my disposition and opinions with respect to Addington, and that which my word shall never belie, it is this—I am much better disposed towards him than I was when he first came into office, because part of my very ill-disposition was founded upon a notion of such a sentiment existing on his side towards me, and which I really believe I did not *mistake*, but certainly *exaggerated*; because in all our intercourse since, whether immediate or through Pitt, I think he has fairly shown an inclination to be reconciled, and to live well together. The other part of my ill-disposition grew out of a suspicion that he had not acted quite so fairly by Pitt, nor shown quite so much reluctance to taking his situation as he ought to have

done. In this I have been so solemnly assured that I was wrong, that I have no pretension to maintain my belief, nor, of course, the sentiments arising out of it. Of his general moral character, and of his meaning well, and of his wishing to give offence to no man, it is impossible to doubt; and to all the quiet feelings of respect and esteem, that is, 'to be thought generally well of,' and 'that no desire should be entertained to put him to death,' he is fairly entitled, and these feelings I profess I have towards him; *but* as to his fitness to be Minister, Lord help us all; the opinion which I formed of him when he came into office, is so far from being altered to his advantage, that I am more and more confirmed in it. Every exhibition which I have witnessed, or heard of in the House of Commons, and every measure which I have had any opportunity to judge of in foreign politics—the Russian Convention for one, and for another, and worst of all, the never, never to be excused or atoned for, this most disgraceful and calamitous treaty of peace, this—but I will not go out of my subject to say all that I think of it, nor would this sheet hold the half of what I should say. This of itself convinces me that he is utterly unfit for the station which he fills, and that never was a more unfortunate event for the country than his being placed there. *Under* the man who made that treaty (I reckon nothing of Hawkesbury, who must merely have held the pen), *under* that man, in subordinate office, that should bind me to adopt implicitly all his opinions, and applaud and support all his measures, I have, God knows, no ambition to serve. An office which should give me a voice to advise in general measures, and a department to act in uncontrolled, there is nothing that I know of to make me refuse with any man, of whose general principles and intentions I have a good opinion; but that on this footing I should be likely to have an offer, if ever, soon, or at all sooner for any meannesses of falsehood or flattery, to which I could debase myself, I do not much believe, and I am sure I shall not put my credulity to the test of experiment.

In the meantime, what is to become of me? and if A.

should never think me worth having upon my own terms, what am I to do? I am much indebted to —— for that anxiety for my welfare which prompts such reflections; but really I do not feel for myself the same despondency, nor see the same difficulty in my situation. I mean to have an independent seat in Parliament; I mean never to set my foot within the doors of the House of Commons again, till I can speak and act in that House according to my own judgment purely, without reference to the will of any other man. 'You will not oppose Pitt surely?' God forbid; but I will never again put myself in a situation in Parliament in which, from any *other* motive than affection and attachment, I MUST vote with him. I will never again be in a situation in which I shall feel myself, as I have felt myself in the instance of the question of this day, obliged in honour to say, 'Such are my opinions, but if with *those opinions* YOU think I ought to vote for the peace with *you*, I ought and will.'

The date of this letter will show what his answer must have been to this reference. I have only to add, that it was the kindest as well as the handsomest that could be written.

I think I have now, though in a somewhat irregular and desultory way, gone through most of the topics expressed or implied in ——'s letter, and I have shown you how widely he and I differ on more than one of them. Oh, but one word as to Opposition; if —— means the principles of Opposition, I need not say how little likely I am to adopt them; if I did I should vote for the peace. If —— means the men, it would be humorous enough, if Addington, acting on Fox's doctrines, and backed by his support, peeraging Grey, and buying Tierney, to say nothing of Nicholl, &c. &c., should expect to keep his supporters firm to himself by no other tie than the fear of being else supposed to join Opposition. But this would lead to a very long chapter indeed. Look at to-day's debates, and then let —— tell me, what, and who are the Opposition?

Ever yours affectionately,

G. C.

'*I* must act as *I think right*. My road must be

'through *character* to power; that I may take this 'road and miss the end, is very possible; nay, that by 'acting as I think right, I may not, as surely as I ex- 'pect it, get even to my second stage—character—is 'very possible also; but *that* I cannot help. I will 'try no other course.'. Memorable words, and worthy of the man who would not have been tempted by the fondest object of ambition to sign a treaty which he abhorred, and would 'rather have cut off his right hand' than allowed it to be the instrument for signing what he considered his own and his country's dishonour!

CHAPTER VII.

PEACE OF AMIENS—BATTLES OF TRAFALGAR AND AUSTERLITZ —MR. PITT'S DEATH—CHARACTER OF MR. PITT.

THE definitive treaty of peace was not signed* at Amiens till more than five months after Mr. Canning had written (as has been seen) his strong condemnation of the preliminaries on which that treaty was based. Looking back without prejudice at this distance of years, both to the terms to which this country agreed, and to the way in which Buonaparte employed the period during the cessation of hostilities, it can hardly be doubted that those statesmen, who were opposed to negotiating with him, were right in thinking that war was an essential element of his power: and, that if he consented to make peace, it would be not with an intention to preserve it, but for the purpose of obtaining a breathing time to prepare himself more effectually for the renewal of the contest. By the terms of the treaty France was left in possession of nearly all her continental conquests, and England gave up all (with the exception of Ceylon and Trinidad) of the different foreign colonies beyond the seas, which during the war she had acquired. Still, had Buonaparte been honestly desirous of a

* March 25, 1802.

permanent peace, the surrenders thus made by England, and the acquisitions left to France, might perhaps have been not more than an equivalent for averting the tremendous evils which so desperate a conflict entailed. But the aggressive spirit of Buonaparte in a very short time converted what might have been an era of peace into nothing better than a feverish truce. Within nine months from the time the treaty was signed, we find the Ministers of the Crown pleading to the House of Commons 'the 'menacing attitude of France, and the ambition and 'enterprise of the Government,' as a reason for keeping up a force which 'exceeded in number and ex-'pense anything that this country had known in any 'former period of peace.'* In another three months a demand was made by the Government for an additional number of seamen; and in two more months the die was cast, and avowed hostilities commenced.† As, during the peace, Buonaparte had aggrandized his power on the Continent, and as England had made the surrender agreed upon of the greater part of her acquisitions, the relative position physically of this country was worse than it was when peace was first made. It had, however, produced one good, and no small good it was: the people were convinced by the conduct of Buonaparte that a real peace was not within their grasp. The experiment had been tried, and it had failed; there was no hope but in resistance. The conduct of the war at its renewal of course fell into the hands of Mr. Addington and his colleagues; but at last the sense of the necessity of having an abler

* Mr. C. Yorke, Dec. 8, 1802. † May 18, 1803.

head and a stronger arm at the helm came with irresistible force upon all parties. Mr. Pitt took to opposition, and Mr. Addington, finding that office was no longer tenable, resigned.

During this period, Mr. Canning, true to the purpose which he made known to his friend, 'never to 'set foot within the doors of the House of Commons 'again till he could speak and act in that House ac- 'cording to his own judgment purely, without refer- 'ence to the will of any other man,' absented himself from Parliament until after the dissolution at the beginning of the year (1803), when he obtained an independent seat, without Mr. Pitt's aid, for the borough of Tralee. This step freed him from the shackles by which he had till then been restrained; and he at once became an avowed and active opponent of Mr. Addington's Administration; but still it appears that he only made one speech which was directly in opposition to Mr. Pitt, for whom he ever retained the sincerest reverence and love. Indeed, his opposition rested mainly on the opinion, which he had deliberately formed of the personal incapacity of Mr. Addington to guide at that alarming crisis, with safety, the perilous affairs of the country; and his feelings were strongly excited by the conviction that Mr. Addington was *the* obstacle to the restoration to power of that one man whom he considered the only one equal to deal with the dangers of our position. If, in certain particulars, he carried his opposition somewhat further than we of the present day may think quite within the bounds of legitimate political hostility, we should not forget the enormous difference in the relative points of view between those

who are engaged in all the fearful excitement of a mortal strife, and those who, however they may now contemplate it, can never divest their minds of the knowledge of its triumphant issue. If the present generation can be so sensitive to the speculative notion of a possible invasion, what must have been the feelings of the past generation, when the most wonderful military genius that ever had appeared on earth was at the head of the 'army of England' encamped on the opposite shores; bearing that ominous designation avowedly because it was collected to make a descent upon the English coast? Let those who may be disposed to think that Mr. Canning went too far in his attacks on Mr. Addington, try, if they can, to realize what his feelings must have been, when he was compelled to witness the defence of his country committed to a feeble and incompetent Minister, and then let them ask themselves, whether he went too far.

Of all the kinds of men to whose lot it may fall to command or to lead in times of great difficulty and danger, those are the worst who are not only feeble and incompetent, but are ignorant that they are so. If a man whom circumstances have unfortunately placed in the position of a leader be incompetent for his duties, and knows it, the chances are he will lean on others more competent than himself; but the misfortune with Mr. Addington was, that he thought himself up to the crisis; and it was Mr. Canning's task, if he could not bring him to take a just measure of himself, to endeavour to make others correctly estimate his powers. To the man, the gentleman, and the Christian, Mr. Canning enter-

tained 'all the quiet feelings of respect and esteem' which were undoubtedly his due; but for the Minister, to whose poor abilities the fate of his country at such a moment was entrusted, Mr. Canning had nothing but condemnation for his presumption; and to that condemnation, put forth, reckless of all the ill-will which he knew it would bring down upon himself, it was greatly owing that England was delivered in time, from the perplexity in which well-meaning but too confident incapacity would have certainly involved her.

There is a passage in one of Mr. Canning's speeches at this period which illustrates his opinions on this subject:—

I know not a more solemn and important duty that a member of Parliament can have to discharge, than by giving, at fit seasons, a free opinion upon the character and quality of public men. Away with the cant of 'Measures, not men;' the idle supposition that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along. No, Sir; if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are everything, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, Sir, of times of difficulty and danger—of times when systems are shaken, and when precedents and general rules of conduct fail; then it is that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a state must be indebted for its salvation—then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavours (laudable though they may be), but by commanding, overawing talents—by able men. And what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is. A man. You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable before the date of Buonaparte's Government; that he found in her great physi-

cal and moral resources; that he had but to turn them to account. True; and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Buonaparte, but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures and his policy—it is his genius, his character which keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to resist, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart, but for the purpose of coping with Buonaparte one great commanding spirit is worth them all.*

This opinion is confirmed by the historian Gibbon:—

In the establishment and restoration of the Turkish Empire, the first merit must doubtless be assigned to the personal qualities of the sultans; since, in human life, the most important scenes will depend on the character of a single actor.†

Again, Mr. Burke says:—

It is an advantage to all narrow wisdom and narrow morals, that their maxims have a plausible air; and, on a cursory view, appear equal to first principles. They are light and portable. They are as current as coin, and about as valuable. They serve equally the first capacities and the lowest; and they are at least as useful to the worst men as to the best. Of this stamp is the cant of 'Not men, but measures;' a sort of charm by which many people get loose from every honourable engagement.‡

To this weight of authority may be added Mr. Fox:—

---

* Speeches, vol. ii. p. 60. † Vol. viii. p. 115.

‡ Burke's Works, vol. i. p. 499.

The reign of Charles II. forms one of the most singular, as well as one of the most important periods of history. It is the era of good laws and bad government. The abolition of the Court of Wards, the repeal of the writ *De Heretico Comburendo ;* the Triennial Parliament Bill, the establishment of the rights of the House of Commons with regard to impeachment, the expiration of the License Act, and, above all, the glorious statute of *Habeas Corpus,* have, therefore, induced a modern writer of great eminence to fix the year 1679 as the period at which our Constitution had arrived at its greatest theoretical perfection. But he owns, in a short note on the passage alluded to, that the times immediately following were times of great practical oppression. What a field for meditation does this short observation from such a man furnish! What reflections does it not furnish for a thinking mind upon the inefficacy of human laws, and the imperfection of human constitutions! We are called from the contemplation of the *progress* of our Constitution, and our attention fixed with the most minute accuracy to a particular point, when it is said to have risen to its utmost perfection. Here we are, then, at the best moment of the best Constitution which ever human wisdom framed. What follows? A time of oppression and misery, not arising from external or accidental causes, such as war, pestilence, or famine, nor even from such alteration of the laws as might be supposed to impair this boasted perfection, but from a corrupt and wicked Administration, which all the so much admired checks of the Constitution were not able to prevent. How vain, then, how idle, how presumptuous is the opinion that laws can do everything! and how weak and pernicious the maxim founded upon it, that 'Measures, not men,' are to be attended to!

Such will always be the opinion of men who feel their own powers; but, notwithstanding, it is frequently found that, when mediocrity raises the cry of 'measures, not men,' it meets with a too general

response, and is treated with that respect, which 'maxims with a plausible air,' and assuming to be 'equal to first principles,' are specially apt to command, when real 'first principles' are lost sight of.

How incalculable is the mischief that a weak mind in authority may effect! how untold the good that a great one may accomplish! Able men responsible to feeble men are shorn of half their power; weak men encouraged by great men are raised to a level far above their own. A weak army will perform wonders when it has implicit confidence in its commander; a brave and well-appointed force will experience fatal disasters when led by a vacillating and incompetent general. Where would have been the galaxy of French marshals which adorned the Empire, if they had been uninspired by that 'amazing ascendency of genius which kept the world in awe'? Where would have been the galaxy of British generals which the contest in the Peninsula revealed, had they been directed by, and responsible to, a man of a greatly inferior genius to Wellington? Under a master-spirit everything is done well,—under self-sufficient mediocrity everything is done ill.

The resignation of Mr. Addington was followed by the restoration of Mr. Pitt to power. Mr. Canning's efforts materially helped this result. Mr. Pitt was desirous, in forming his Ministry, that it should not have an exclusive character. He wished that Mr. Fox's talents should be enlisted in the official service of the country. But George III. could not then forget the past conduct of Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt was unable to prevail upon his Majesty to set aside his

objections.* The Ministry was therefore formed of Mr. Pitt's party alone: it contained the names of Mr. Canning, as Treasurer of the Navy, and of Sir Arthur Wellesley (already celebrated as the conqueror at Assaye) as Secretary for Ireland.

The first acts of the Minister were to increase our military and naval forces. He then employed himself in organizing and stirring up a hostile combination of the great European Powers against the French Emperor, who was elevated to that high rank about two months after Mr. Pitt's return to power.

But Mr. Pitt, whilst organizing this continental confederacy against Napoleon, did not neglect our naval strength, by which he knew the protection of England from a French invasion could alone be secured. Every effort, therefore, was made to place Nelson at the head of such an armament as would enable him to destroy the fleet of the enemy (now recruited by the Spanish navy), whenever he should be successful in forcing them to an encounter. The success of our unaided nautical efforts was as signal as the failure of the continental combination. The Battle of Trafalgar† made England completely mistress of the seas; from that day almost all expectation of an invasion ceased; on the other hand, the Battle of Austerlitz, and the peace with Austria which followed, left Napoleon undisputed master of nearly the whole of Europe, from the confines of Russia to the western shores of the Atlantic.

---

* Lord Grenville declined to join Mr. Pitt, as he would not sanction a principle of what he called 'personal exclusion.'

† Oct. 25, 1805.

Great as was the consolation which Mr. Pitt derived from Nelson's victory, it did not prevent his bitterly taking to heart the defeat of his hopes for the deliverance of Europe, in consequence of French triumphs by land. His constitution, naturally a weak one, had had to stand a marvellous amount of wear and tear from his early manhood; now, however, it gave way; rumours were circulated of his failing health. Some members of his family were anxious to conceal his real state, but the truth became too strong for concealment. On the 21st of January, 1806, Mr. Pitt breathed his last.

Mr. Canning thus mentions the sad event in a letter to his friend:—

> You will probably have heard before this reaches you, that there is an end of all our hopes and fears respecting Mr. Pitt. I left Putney last night about ten, with the sad conviction that he could not outlive the night. He died at half-past four, without a struggle.

Mr. Canning's love and veneration for his great leader never varied. On every fitting occasion, in after years, he stood forward either as his eulogist or his defender. Immediately after Mr. Pitt's death, Mr. Canning concluded a sketch of his character in these words:—

> Absorbed as he was in the pursuits of public life, he did not neglect to prepare himself in silence for that higher destination, which is at once the incentive and reward of human virtue. His talents, superior and splendid as they were, never made him forgetful of that Eternal Wisdom from which they emanated. The faith and fortitude of his last moments were affecting and exemplary.

In 1811* he thus spoke of him in the House of Commons:—

Mr. Pitt, it seems, is not a great man. Is it, then, that we live in such heroic times, that the present is a race of such gigantic talents and qualities as to render those of Mr. Pitt, in the comparison, ordinary or contemptible? Who, then, is the man now living—is there any man now sitting in this House, who, by taking the measure of his own mind, or of that of any of his cotemporaries, can feel himself justified in pronouncing that Mr. Pitt was not a great man? I admire, as much as any man, the abilities and ingenuity of the honourable and learned gentleman† who promulgated this opinion. I do not deny him many of the qualities which go to constitute the character which he has described. But I think I may defy all his ingenuity to frame any definition of that character which shall not apply to Mr. Pitt—to trace any circle of greatness from which Mr. Pitt shall be excluded.

And again at Liverpool, at his first contest, he thus responds to the toast 'To Mr. Pitt's Memory:'—

In the course of the recent contest Mr. Pitt has been reviled as the advocate and author of war. Without now going into any argument into the origin of the war in 1793, this, at least, I think, may be affirmed of Mr. Pitt beyond the possibility of contradiction, that if ever there was a statesman in the world whose interests individually were founded on peace—if ever there was a statesman of whom it might be presumed that, in conducting his country into war, he was led by a sense of irresistible necessity, it must have been he whose fame, as well as power, rested upon the basis of the financial prosperity of his country.

When posterity shall look back upon that great man, they will discriminate two different eras in his life—the one, when on his succession to the Government of his country he found the finances of the State dilapidated, and its resources ener-

* January 2. † Sir Samuel Romilly.

vated by an ill-conducted war; it was then that, with a skilful and repairing hand, he restored the credit of the country and recruited its exhausted means, explored and expanded its capacities for exertion, and laid the foundation of that solid system, of which it is enough to say, that it has endured amid the storms which have assailed it since that time. From this statement it may be confidently inferred that war could not be more the passion of Mr. Pitt than most assuredly it was his interest. Whether it were, nevertheless, the fault of Mr. Pitt or not (the fault I mean of his judgment), that we were engaged precisely at the moment at which we were engaged in the war, which has continued, with little intermission, to the present time, may, perhaps, be matter of historical controversy. But by no human wisdom, or by no human forbearance, that war could have been deferred many years, or perhaps many months, the impartial historian will, I think, find it easy to demonstrate; but, be that as it may, however we may have been brought into the war, what admits of no controversy at all is, that, from the reviving energy of his early administration, the country derived that strength by which it has been enabled to sustain the contest. The second era of his political life began at the period when, from the centre of Europe, burst forth that volcanic eruption of desolating principles, which threatened to overwhelm the civilized world. The firm resistance which Mr. Pitt opposed to the dangers then menacing the country; the promptitude with which he took his ground on the stand of the Constitution, and the courage with which he maintained it; the voice with which he roused the people, the mighty arm with which he saved the monarchy, I need not recall to your recollection.

But notwithstanding all that has been said and written, eulogistic and explanatory, in defence of Mr. Pitt's administration, so long as party exists, so long will different opinions probably be entertained of its merits. Thus it has been said of Mr. Pitt that 'the 'price at which he [Lord Chatham] purchased faithful

'service and complete victory, though far smaller than 'that which his son, the most profuse and incapable of 'War Ministers, paid for treachery, defeat, and shame, 'was long and severely felt by the nation.'

Those who have been in the habit of considering Mr. Pitt in a directly opposite light to this sweeping censure, naturally inquire whether, impartially reviewing the various events connected with the war which occurred while Mr. Pitt was in power, a correct induction at all justifies so unmitigated a condemnation.

Few will be disposed to deny that the genius of Napoleon Buonaparte for war has been rarely equalled, certainly never surpassed, by that of any man whose warlike deeds are recorded in the annals of history. Failure in a contest with such a man is not therefore a fair criterion whereby to judge the comparative merits of his antagonist. Before the latter can be pronounced incapable as a War Minister, it must be shown that other War Ministers had as great giants to contend with. But judging of the merits of Mr. Pitt's measures by the vulgar test of success or failure, his admirers need not shrink even from such an ordeal.

The one grand object of Buonaparte was to subdue England by a successful invasion. For this end twice during Mr. Pitt's life he made gigantic preparations. Mr. Pitt, however, was not content to wait in order to defeat the attempt, should it be made; he did what was far better; by his defensive preparations he prevented the attempt from being made at all. Had Napoleon succeeded in throwing an army upon our shores, and had it been crushed as soon as landed,

and had the ships which brought it been destroyed, then all must have acknowledged Mr. Pitt's great capacity as a War Minister. But he resolved to prevent the attack, and he succeeded. He thought only of his country's safety.

In order that Mr. Pitt's policy in the character of a War Minister may be fairly estimated, it must be divided into two parts—the one his management of the war by sea, the other its management by land. Of the two, to this sea-girt island the former is by far the most important. Mistress of the seas, no hostile intruder can set foot upon our shores.

It appears then that in her maritime warfare Great Britain was uniformly successful: not merely in such unexampled and wonderful victories as Copenhagen, the Nile, and Trafalgar, but in other battles of more or less magnitude; but, of whatever magnitude, invariably resulting in victory. Beyond the seas England deprived her enemies of every colony of value which they possessed. Such were the results (nautically) to this nation of Mr. Pitt's war administration.

In our contests by land Great Britain was certainly not so uniformly successful. At the commencement of the contest our forces were obliged to retire from Holland. One or two very minor expeditions were not more successful: but, in India, by the wisdom and firmness of Lord Wellesley's brilliant administration British dominion was consolidated, and the French were driven out of the peninsula. In the not less important matter of the expulsion of the French from Egypt, the possession of which by the French, Buonaparte intended as a menace to our Indian dominions, England was completely triumphant. The

brave Sir Ralph Abercrombie fell in the arms of victory at the battle of Alexandria, and the remnant of the French expedition in consequence were compelled to purchase their lives by surrender. Now Lord Wellesley was chosen, and this Egyptian triumph was planned by Mr. Pitt.

That he gave subsidies to assist the great Continental Powers in resisting the aggressions of Buonaparte, and that their resistance ended in defeat, is true; but because those Powers proved to be unsuccessful, there is no ground for imputing treachery. The Emperor of Austria, in staking the fate of his Italian dominions at Marengo, and the fate of his crown and empire at Austerlitz, gave the strongest proof of sincerity which a monarch could give.

For these defeats, however, Mr. Pitt as a War Minister was in no way responsible. In the character of British Premier he may be charged with profuseness; but the success or failure of military operations, in which he was unable to interfere either in organizing the force, or in selecting or instructing the commanders, cannot bear upon his capacity as a War Minister. That the defeat of Buonaparte was a most important object for this country, no one will deny: few but will admit that it would have been cheaply purchased with the subsidies sent by the British Government to the Continental Powers. Those, therefore, who condemn this policy of Mr. Pitt must do more. They are bound to condemn him for the want of a superhuman penetration; for nothing short of a penetration which *was* superhuman could have foreseen *as inevitable* the surrender at Ulm, the rout at Austerlitz, and the consequent ignominious peace.

On the whole, as a War Minister, Mr. Pitt planned, on the one hand, *some* comparatively unimportant *military* operations which were not successful; on the other, he planned some very important ones, which were eminently successful; whilst, under his sway, were carried on the most extensive and triumphant *naval* operations which the annals of the world record: operations which saved his native land from being trodden under foot of the invader.

Wisely and truly did Mr. Canning say of him—'He had qualities rare in their separate excellence, wonderful in their combination.'

CHAPTER VIII.

'ALL THE TALENTS' ADMINISTRATION—DEATH OF MR. FOX —LORD GRENVILLE'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH MR. CANNING.

IMMEDIATELY after the death of Mr. Pitt, the King offered to Lord Hawkesbury* the Premiership; but, in the then state of parties, his lordship thought it was more consistent with his public duty to decline the offer.

The King was thus thrown back upon the Opposition; and although his Majesty was well aware that Lord Grenville (so long the Foreign Secretary under Mr. Pitt) had, during his last short Ministry, become an ally of Mr. Fox, he was not deterred by that circumstance from calling upon him to form an Administration. It appears, indeed, by what passed between his Majesty and Lord Grenville at their first interview, that the King had made up his mind to withdraw his objections to Mr. Fox being a member of the Cabinet; so that when Lord Grenville, in replying to the royal inquiry, 'Whom do you mean to consult?' at once made known his intention to apply to Mr. Fox, the King frankly answered, 'I thought so, and meant it so.'

The readiness with which the King made this concession, has been considered as a proof that Mr. Pitt

* Afterwards Lord Liverpool.

might, in 1804, have obtained the same concession. It may be admitted that most probably he might, *had he refused to take the Government on any other terms.* But had Mr. Pitt forced his Sovereign to receive a person into his service to whom he expressed very strong objections, he surely would not have acted either a loyal, or a patriotic part. However desirous Mr. Pitt undoubtedly was to secure Mr. Fox's co-operation, the difficulties of his post would have been sorely aggravated, had he set out in his new official career by forfeiting the good-will and confidence of his Sovereign—more especially as they had parted, not on account of any Parliamentary defeat, but on account of a difference of opinion between them. In the altered circumstances occasioned by the death of Mr. Pitt, it is not to be wondered at that the King saw no other alternative but that of admitting Mr. Fox to his councils.

The new Administration was accordingly formed (February, 1806), with Lord Grenville, as First Lord of the Treasury and First Minister; Mr. Fox, Foreign Secretary, and leader of the House of Commons; Mr. Windham, as Home Secretary; and Mr. Addington (who had been created Lord Sidmouth), as Privy Seal; and Lord Ellenborough, not as the Lord Chief Justice of England, but as Mr. Addington's friend, had also a seat in the Cabinet. A curious mixture! but such as exclusion from office, and consequent union in opposition, every now and then produces in the workings of our mixed Constitution. It was this Administration which was nicknamed 'All the Talents.' In reference to which, Mr. Canning, in a letter dated in the following August, speaking of one

of his friends just returned from abroad, observes,—'Seriously, he is, to my infinite amazement (amuse-'ment, if it were merely a laughing matter), in the 'high "concentration of talents" doctrine, which the 'world *here* began to think ridiculous in March, and 'about which, I suppose, there no longer exists a 'grave opinion in this country.'

The first important measure of the new Ministry went to place the army on a new footing. It is not here intended to enter into a detail, or even to give the outline, of all the measures of temporary interest in dealing with which Mr. Canning took part, but only to notice those parts of his speeches in which he laid down great fundamental principles—principles as applicable to the present time as they were applicable to the times in which they were enunciated. The following extracts are taken from his speeches on the Mutiny Bill:—

I say, Sir (he observed), I should hope this [might be the case], if it were not that the clause which we are discussing is so framed (and I must say I think most improperly so framed) as to take away all the discretion from the Crown hereafter, in the executive regulation [of the army], no less than in the legislative provision; to curtail and abridge the royal prerogative in that particular in which it has been the practice (and I think the wisdom) of all states to leave the executive government in possession of the fullest control—namely, the discipline and internal economy of the regular army.

And further on he says—

If there be one political truth more undeniable than another, it is this, that no good has ever arisen from the interference of public assemblies with the military force of the state. Any attempt on the part of such assemblies to become popular

with the army is sure to lead to difficulty, and in the end, not seldom to confusion.*

In a subsequent speech on the same measure, he observes:—

I would leave the King's authority over the regular army entire, as I find it; but I would not trust the whole defence of the country, internal as well as external, to that army alone. Leave us our constitutional force [the Militia, the Yeomanry, and the Volunteers], and there is no danger from the regular army. But it is a poor device, first to break down every other force upon which the country has relied, and to which the Constitution is partial, and then to think we can remedy the inconvenience by taking the government of the regular army into our own hands.

Here is wisdom. Here are principles, as important now as they were then; principles which, if ever they are allowed by the British people to be set at nought by their rulers, it may be safely predicted that the downfall of liberty in this land is not far distant. Whatever was the real tendency of the measure proposed by the Ministers, it must, however, in fairness be conceded to them, that the object which they had in view was a wise one—viz., to strengthen the military power of the country; equally wise, whether as bearing upon perseverance in the war, or upon negotiating terms of peace, on which task Mr. Fox was bent. For, notwithstanding the short duration of the Peace of Amiens, he remained unconvinced that peace was not constantly within our grasp; he had argued elaborately, when the war was renewed, to show that the facts did not justify its renewal, and that hostilities might have been avoided. Even so late as the 20th of June,

* Canning's *Speeches*, vol. ii. pp. 10–45.

1805, within eight months of his own accession to power, he is found in the House of Commons, 'recommending to all the Powers of Europe a system of 'justice and moderation, as the only means of putting 'an end to the evils under which we were labouring. 'He recommended a general Congress, and that these 'principles should be prevalent in its deliberations. 'He knew,' he added, 'that he excited a smile when 'he recommended these notions, because they were 'thought chimerical; but those who thought so had 'found that their own system had failed, but they 'had never tried his.'*

The opportunity had now arrived for his own 'system to be tried' in his own way. And it is but just to the benevolent disposition of Mr. Fox to say, that he seems to have set about trying it in right good earnest. Many circumstances were in his favour. He had always spoken with respect, sometimes with admiration, of Napoleon; they had become personally known to each other at Paris during the short peace; shortly after he had accepted office, he had communicated information to the French Emperor respecting a conspiracy against his life. The victory of Austerlitz was balanced by the triumph at Trafalgar; so that, if France was all-powerful on the Continent, England was all-powerful at sea.

Negotiations were accordingly entered into, and all Mr. Fox's great talents were employed to insure a favourable result. He selected Lords Yarmouth and Lauderdale to be the British plenipotentiaries. They pursued their labours for some time. The result

* Fox's *Speeches*, vol. vi. p. 621.

is thus described by Mr. Fox's own colleagues, in the words put into the King's Speech, after Mr. Fox had followed Mr. Pitt to the tomb.

'His Majesty,' said the royal commissioners (December 19, 1806), 'has employed every effort for the 'restoration of general tranquillity, on terms consis- 'tent with the honour and interests of his people, and 'with inviolable good faith towards his allies. But 'the ambition and injustice of the enemy have disap- 'pointed these endeavours.'

Such was the fate attendant on the trial of Mr. Fox's system under his own guidance. It is not, however, fair to retaliate, and to charge him, as he charged Mr. Pitt, with insincerity and want of skill. The charge would be ungenerous: the enemy only manifested that same 'ambition and injustice' which he had before invariably displayed—Fox was not blameable because he failed, but Fox's failure vindicated his rival's fame. Not long after, Lord Howick (afterwards Earl Grey), Mr. Fox's successor in the Foreign Office, when recommending a vigorous prosecution of the war, thus expressed himself in the House of Commons:—'I am, at the same time, Sir, far 'from encouraging sanguine expectations of success 'after all that has happened on the Continent within 'these few years. The event is in the hands of "Him 'who giveth the victory." But one thing is certain— 'that the progress of Buonaparte has never yet been 'stopped by submission, and our only hope, therefore, 'is in resistance, so far as we can resist his ambitious 'projects.'* Such was the public testimony given at the time by the great Whig leaders to the necessity of

* January 5, 1807.

this war with France. It is strongly corroborated by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*,* who has evidently taken great pains in examining into his subject, and who has clearly had access to authentic private information. In writing of the negotiations at Paris and their failure, he remarks: 'The practical experience of 'Buonaparte's policy thus acquired, convinced Mr. 'Fox that peace with him was impossible, and that the 'active prosecution of the war was inevitable' (p. 304); and in the next page he adds: 'Almost Mr. Fox's 'last words, to one of his most intimate friends and 'colleagues, enjoined on his survivors the vigorous 'prosecution of the war.'

Here then was this great statesman, who, from the beginning of the war, for a period of fifteen years, had been publicly proclaiming his opinion that it was unnecessary in its origin, and capable, by a wise system of policy, of being brought, at almost any period, to a satisfactory termination, convinced 'by a practical experience of Buonaparte's policy,' that 'with him peace was impossible.'

Lord John Russell's testimony, the matured opinion of after years, is to the same effect. After having, in his *Life of Fox*, described Burke's policy as being for a crusade against the revolutionary Governments of France, Lord John says:—

> Happily Burke's advice was disregarded. Mr. Pitt took a totally different view of the nature and objects of the war. He was ready to admit that we had nothing to do with the internal government of France, provided its rulers were disposed and able to maintain friendly relations with foreign Governments. He sought to confine France within her ancient

* No. ccxx.

limits, to oblige her to respect established treaties, and to renounce her conquests. He sought by expeditions to the West Indies an indemnity for the expense of the war. In short, he treated Robespierre and Carnot as he would have treated any other French rulers whose ambition was to be resisted, and whose interference in the affairs of other nations was to be checked and prevented.*

This accumulated testimony must settle for ever in the minds of impartial persons the necessity of the war, both in its origin and in its continuance.

From the time Lord Grenville's Government was installed, the party known by the name of 'Mr. Pitt's friends' (of which Mr. Canning was the inspiring genius), acted in opposition. It was in the middle of June (1806), that Mr. Fox's health compelled him to withdraw from the House of Commons: his absence of course materially weakened the Government in that House; and it appears (the health of Mr. Fox continuing to decline) that Lord Grenville, before the middle of August, began to consider how he might be able to strengthen his position in that House. He naturally turned to Mr. Canning. They had been co-labourers in the Foreign Office for the last eight years of Mr. Pitt's first Administration; they agreed in their views respecting the disabilities of the Roman Catholics; but, above all, they agreed that the prosecution of the war with France—the all-important question of the day—was unavoidable. Accordingly the Premier employed a mutual friend, Lord Wellesley,† as an intermediary.

---

* *Memoirs of Fox*, by Lord John Russell, vol. iii. p. 32.

† The name of Lord Wellesley is given on the authority of Lord Malmesbury.—*Diary*, vol. iii. p. 354.

I have no document in my possession which gives any account of the first overture, or its precise date; but in a letter from Mr. Canning to Lord Boringdon, dated August 23, 1806, he writes of 'the overture recently made to me by one part of the Government;' and he subsequently adds:—

The day after you left town I had another message and conversation, more full, more particular, and *personally*, respecting myself much more flattering than any that preceded. But it was not such as I *could* act upon. This subject, however, I must reserve for another opportunity.

On the 29th of the same month Mr. Canning returns to the subject:—

Aug. 29, 1806.

The substance of the communication which I have to make to you respecting Lord G.'s overtures, beyond what you knew when you left town, is this:—A direct and distinct offer to me *personally* of everything that *I* could desire or expect, accompanied with a profession of readiness to make *any professional* arrangement for Perceval that could be contrived, and that should be most agreeable to himself, and of a disposition to consider *other* claims fairly, as opportunities hereafter might arise, *but* with the plain intimation that no opening could be made in the Cabinet at present, except the one for me; and that the claims of other persons, whatever they might be in their own estimation, were estimated but as *light* in the opinion of the offerer.

I hardly need tell you what answer I gave to this proposition; nor need I explain to you the ground upon which—first, in point of *honour*, I was bound to decline listening to it; secondly, even if I had been, in my own opinion, perfectly free to accept it, I should nevertheless have thought it as little for my interest (well understood) to do so. I am almost sure that you will not only agree with me as to the decision (about which, situated as I am, I had no

option, but will enter into all the considerations which would have led me to that decision, even if my judgment had been unfettered by any regard to other persons. To be plunged *alone* into the midst of the present Cabinet, constituted as it now is, and *that* not in consequence of any general arrangement on either side, but by Lord G.'s* individual selection of me individually, and without the K.'s previous knowledge; in these circumstances to have had the labour of the House of Commons to devolve upon me in Fox's absence, and (what would be worse) under F.'s occasional superintendence, would, I really think, have formed altogether the most undesirable, the most discreditable, and the most helpless situation into which any man ever was misguided by an inconsiderate precipitancy of ambition.

I had, therefore, no hesitation in refusing, and I have not even thought it worth while to mention to Perceval the share which he had in the offer (as the offer to him was *contingent* upon *my* previous acceptance, though *his* acceptance would not have followed mine): nor, indeed, did I think it quite fair to do so in that period of the business, as I could not but think it likely that, having gone so far, I should yet hear something further from Lord G., and something, perhaps, more fit to be communicated. I was not deceived in the first part of this expectation. The day after Leveson left me last week, I received a letter from Lord G.'s ambassador, proposing to pay me a visit. (L. is able to inform you who this ambassador is. I have not mentioned his name to any political person, and I intend you to keep it secret, when you know it). He came here on Wednesday. He came, however, furnished with arguments to enforce his former proposition, rather than with any new powers to offer one of a larger, or more satisfactory sort.

But, though the repetition of very nearly the same proposition could produce only a repetition of the same answer, the opportunity, which was two long uninterrupted walks in the country, afforded of thoroughly discussing the whole sub-

* Grenville's.

ject, enabled me to explain myself to the satisfaction of the visitor; and not only that, but (I really think) to convince him that, if Lord G. was serious in what he proposed—if he felt the necessity of strengthening his Government (which it was not for me to judge of), and if he wished to look for aid to the Opposition bench in the House of Commons, it would be infinitely for his advantage to make up his mind at once to such an extent of offer as would alone satisfy the honour of those whom he wished to unite to himself; and should leave to those, who must be, for a time at least, unsatisfied, no fair ground to consider themselves deserted or ill-used. That everybody could have precisely what they would like best, in an arrangement so comprehensive, was, of course, impracticable. But the *consent* of everybody concerned must be had to the arrangement, or it would not answer its purpose; and it seemed to me quite idle to suppose that I could ask their consent to one in which *I* should be the only person considered; or that Lord G. should suppose that he could make room, or gain credit for any exertion to do so, without any move in his present Cabinet. There were besides two very material points to be ascertained before, as I thought, he could reasonably expect an answer to even an unexceptionable offer. The first, the settlement, one way or other, of the question of peace or war. In case of the continuance of the war, I felt for myself that I should be infinitely more disposed to overlook trifling difficulties, for the sake of giving all the aid I could to the Government, in whatever hands it might be. I certainly could have no fear that I should not approve of the breaking off the negotiation, whatever the immediate grounds of the rupture might be; and even the most pacific would be probably satisfied with the tone and temper of a discussion for peace, dictated by Fox, and carried on by Lauderdale. But in the event of a peace, I felt it quite impossible to give any pledge beforehand. Peace of itself, by diminishing the pressure of difficulty, would lessen the public grounds for a junction; at the same time that the terms of it might obviously suggest differences of opinion, which would render the junction itself less practicable, with credit

to either party. The second point was, the state of Fox's health, and the measures to be taken in case of his being disabled (of this the account which I received on Wednesday was very different from that which Leveson had brought here the Wednesday preceding—much less favourable; but the plan, which, according to L., was in contemplation, that of F.'s retaining his office, and abdicating parliamentary attendance, with a purpose of coming down, every now and then, to see that things were going on right) is precisely that which would least induce me to take a part in what would be then, more than ever, his administration in the House of Commons. Lastly, there was a third and still more important point, which I earnestly impressed upon my visitor's consideration. If Lord Grenville meant to make his Government all that it ought to be, for weight, authority, popularity, and confidence, the *K.* must be admitted into it.

Any new modification must be proposed to the K. by Lord G., previous to its being carried into effect. The K. must approve the design, and he must be seen in the execution. Lord G. would thus have an opportunity of retrieving a first false step, which he might depend upon it was the cause of a *great part of the indisposition* felt towards the Government throughout the country. I said that I was sure this advice was good for himself, whether I had anything to do with his future arrangements or not; but, certain it was, that neither I, nor any one with whom I was acting, would have anything to do with them, unless we had reason to believe that it was the King's wish.

This is the substance of what passed. It will reach Lord G. to-day or to-morrow. Possibly I may hear no more from him. He may be taking himself to other modes of gaining strength—Tierney, &c. &c. At all events I can hear nothing decisive, at least can say nothing decisive, till the fate of the negotiation* is known, and by that time, probably, the uncertainty with respect to F.'s recovery, and the degree of it, may be cleared up also.

---

* For peace.

Let me have your opinion upon the whole of this subject, and pray remember that all that is here is for yourself alone.

Ever yours affectionately,

G. C.

On the 7th of September he again writes:—

MY DEAR BORINGDON,

Your letter was neither tedious nor unsatisfactory (as you apprehend), and, for cheapness, it had the advantage of a striking contrast with a great fat official letter, which came to me in the same bag (by mistake), as Treasurer of the Navy, and cost *3s. 6d.* I hold it honest to confess that when I heard the charge, and caught a glimpse of your hand, my mind, for a moment, misgave me, but it was only to give you the more glory, when I found the injustice of the suspicion.

Upon the whole there are not many points upon which there is any particular difference between us. I agree with you as to what is the result most to be *wished*, provided one could bring that result about in one's own way. Perhaps I may agree also that it is possible, that even the event of peace might not be necessarily decisive against such an arrangement. Indeed you have argued that question (so far as regards the public grounds of it) nearly as it was argued by Lord G.'s ambassador. I find much greater difficulty in admitting that any possible modification of Fox's continuance in office could be compatible with the execution of this measure; but I will not absolutely deny the *possibility* of it, though I think it, in the highest degree, improbable.

I have a letter, since I wrote to you, from the ambassador, informing me that Lord G. agrees with me in the opinion, that no final decision can well be taken, or expected, on the subject, until one or both of the two great uncertainties now pending (F.'s recovery, and the negotiation at Paris) shall have been determined. Here then is a pause, during which Lord G. will probably turn in his mind the other sugges-

tions which have been conveyed to him, and upon a full review of the situation of his Government (as he would have it), and of his own situation in that Government, will decide, either to make a more acceptable proposal, or to go on as he is, T. Grenville leading the House of Commons, in F.'s absence, and, perhaps, Tierney and Whitbread added to their Treasury Bench.

In this latter case I quite agree with you, that the task of Opposition is highly promising. Even the victories in Calabria (which I should be sorry if Opposition could have hardened one against admiring and rejoicing in), will, in the event of peace, tell against the Government; and if the war goes on, when compared with the disembarkation at Plymouth, will tell but little for them.

Yours, G. C.

The 'disembarkation at Plymouth' is thus explained in Mr. Canning's speech on the Address, at the opening of the session:—

We have heard of a great statesman who stripped the country of troops, which he employed on various active services, and then boasted that he defended it at a distance. Could the gentleman opposite make a similar boast? After orders, and counter-orders, and confirmation of orders, and revocations of confirmations, and counter-commands, &c., an expedition did actually sail from the Downs, and arrived —where? at Plymouth; certainly a place not very well provided with the means of defence; and had the same expedition proceeded to some possession of the enemy not superior in strength to Plymouth, it might, very possibly, have succeeded in taking it. But, perhaps, this was meant as an experiment. It might have been said, 'We'll sail from the Downs, land at Plymouth, and surprise the dockers.' It is prudent to try to swim upon a table before committing ourselves to the waves. But could the country forget the loudness of his (Mr. Windham's) accusations against his predecessors, for what he termed their supineness and neglect? Yet what had he himself done? When war was raging in

29970

Prussia, our peace Minister was on his return. The whole amount of the right honourable gentleman's campaign was a firework before Boulogne, and (yet that wanted confirmation) an embarkation on the Paddington canal. But for the uncommon openness of the weather, it is probable that his army would have been frozen up at Uxbridge.

On the following 13th of September Mr. Fox expired. He lived, however, long enough to foresee the probable failure of the negotiations. It is remarkable that within the short space of eight months it should have pleased God to deprive this country of her two most illustrious statesmen. The King much regretted his loss. 'Little did I think,' said his Majesty, to those of his family by whom he was surrounded when the melancholy news arrived, 'little 'did I think that I should ever live to regret Mr. Fox's 'death.' The King repeated the same sentiment to Lord Sidmouth* at his first interview after the event.

The negotiations being renewed by Lord Grenville (in consequence of the loss of his colleague) with Mr. Canning, they are thus described by him:—

South Hill, September 24, 1806.

My dear Boringdon,

I have delayed writing to you, till I should have something definitive to say, and I am sorry that what I have now to tell you (what indeed you will pretty well collect before you receive this letter) is not exactly conformable to your wishes, or probably to your expectations.

You will probably have expected, as I confess I did, that the event of Fox's death would have afforded Lord G. facility in the arrangements which he appeared to have in contemplation; why it has not done so, I can hardly conjecture. The result, however, is, as you see; the new arrange-

* *Life of Sidmouth*, vol. ii. p. 435.

ments are making on the basis of his present Government exclusively.

What has passed since last I wrote to you, is shortly this. I had occasion to be in town on the Thursday preceding Fox's death. On that day I received an invitation to an interview, at which the original offer was renewed to me with increased earnestness, but with no further increase of extent than the addition of *one* subordinate opening. It then stood thus, one Cabinet office for myself, a law office for Perceval, and one Privy Councillor's office for whomsoever I should name. It is hardly necessary to say, that I could not accept, or report to those with whom I act, such a proposal. It was pressed upon me, on the ground, that Fox's situation made an immediate decision indispensable. I, of course, decided immediately, and considered the business at an end. The next day (Friday) for the first time, a disposition was professed to consider the claims and pretensions of the body of persons connected with me, in a larger view; and, I was requested to put down the names of such as I thought it most important and indispensable to comprehend in such a consideration. There was this day a notion of poor Fox's being somewhat better, and à chance therefore was supposed to be afforded of time for deliberation and discussion. The list, which I gave in, contained the names of those, *not*, who must *all* have offices, but *among* whom such offices as could be opened must be distributed; and of whom, such as were not included in the distribution must nevertheless be consulted, and excluded only by their own consent. I did not put down the names of such as had already signified, that they would not be in the way of any arrangement. This day I really thought, and so did the person with whom I communicated, that there was a reasonable prospect of our coming to an understanding, but on Saturday morning this prospect vanished. I was assured that Lord G. had given the most anxious consideration to the whole question, but upon turning it in every point of view, that his means of making provision fell so infinitely short of what must naturally be supposed to be the proportion of persons named, for whom

something would be to be provided, that it was better to consider the whole as at an end. Of subordinate offices, that is below Cabinet, he did not see the possibility of vacating one, beyond that single one already mentioned. In the Cabinet two, or at the very utmost three (counting Fox's vacancy as one) were all that he could by any exertion contrive. By Fox's vacancy, I do not think he intended that *his* Secretaryship should be one of the offices given to us; I think not. I apprehend T. Grenville would have filled that, and that the Board of Controul and the Presidency of the Council were two, and what was the third to be offered (unless the Secretaryship at War to be somehow or other vacated by Fitzpatrick), I cannot tell. It was plain that he had not the slightest thought of stirring any of the members of the present Cabinet against their will, and none of them, probably (except Lord Fitzwilliam) had the slightest thought, on their part, of making room by a voluntary move. Lord Sidmouth was to remain in full glory, and Windham was to be kept exactly where he is—a determination of itself almost sufficient to defeat, and certainly to discredit any compromise between us and the Government. And if I had undertaken to convey this proposal to the body, I must have said, Gentlemen, there are three offices, of which I take the best myself, the other two among you all, as you can settle it; and besides here is one whole office, or rather one half (for it was a pay office I believe), among all that are under Cabinet. Lord Ellenborough, Windham, and the Doctor remaining as they are, and every Foxite in the place, out of which every friend of Mr. Pitt has been turned to make way for them.

I really thought that the making such a proposal, to become as public as it necessarily must have become, after being discussed by us, as a body, was more likely to make any future reconcilement impossible, than to effect one now. Indeed, he did not himself appear to have imagined that I could undertake to propose it. We parted, therefore (our common friend and I) with expressions of mutual regret (very sincere, I am persuaded, on his part, as well as mine), and with a declaration from him, which I certainly must believe, that it was for my sake only that Lord G. had

entered seriously into the attempt to devise means of bringing others in; so it was for mine alone, that he felt grieved at the insufficiency of his means of effecting that purpose.

Nothing certainly could be more flattering, as I could not but allow; but to have profited by his good intentions towards me on *his* terms, I must have consented to take office at the expense of character, and I believe, to hold it without power.

On Saturday I left town: in the evening Fox died. This, I presume, made it necessary for Lord G. to set about his internal arrangements forthwith; otherwise I am not without a suspicion that he would have thought the matter over once again, and endeavoured to enlarge his offer. He certainly had, though he fancied he had not, the means of doing so.

In thinking over, on my part, what had passed, it occurred to me as the only omission of which I could accuse myself, that I had not distinctly stated what proposal I would have undertaken to carry, though it was plain, what I could not. It occurred to me, also, that one of the persons among us for whom a situation is most difficult to be found, and for whom Lord G. is much the least eager to find one—Lord Eldon (indeed he would much rather be without him)—might be accommodated, like his brother Ellenborough, if not in lieu of him, with a seat without an office. He has a pension of 4000*l.* a-year, which is better than any office he could have, or as good as any, except the seals. This would give one easy seat; Lord Chatham must be another, Castlereagh and myself in the House of Commons (even if Yorke could be omitted), make four; and Liverpool or Westmorland must be the fifth. I did not name the individuals, but I signified that five seats, one of them without office, I would have undertaken to propose. This, however, I did rather as an exoneration of my conscience than as expecting any good from it, being thoroughly persuaded that Lord G. on his side had meant little more than the exoneration of his, when he made his proposal on Saturday. He would have been glad to win individuals, but he had no desire to wed the party. I do not say that I blame him, but unluckily I cannot be won alone.

Nothing could be more unfortunate than Lord G.'s having

delayed making up his mind to the principle of an enlarged proposal till the very last moment. Even as late as Thursday night, he appeared to be more decided than ever to treat only with and for myself, giving what little else he was willing to give only as facilities for my junction. This put it out of my power to consult any one of the body beforehand. Had as much time been given to negotiate as was wasted in the repetition of fruitless attempts upon me singly, I think it probable that their terms might have been lowered on the one side, so as to meet, or nearly meet, what in the end he might have been willing to give on the other.

Another very important thing is, that of the two events which it was agreed to wait, *that* one should have happened first, which necessitated the immediately making the arrangements; while that which in one case would have contributed infinite facility in point of principle and public motive—the issue of the negotiations at Paris—yet remains undetermined.

The determination to keep Windham where he is, perhaps, is the most unfortunate circumstance of all. Nothing could reconcile it to the feelings of the House of Commons (at least, I mean, while present impressions remain), to see Mr. Pitt's friends marching across the House to sit by the side of Windham, unless they were to go in such strength either in point of numbers, or of efficiency of office, as to overwhelm him and his Secretaryship of State; which is out of the question, was so, even before these new arrangements, and since is more so still.

Upon the whole, therefore, I see not how things could have been otherwise, though I really regret their being as they are.

The nature of the new arrangements, and of Lord G.'s new situation in consequence of them, their probable popularity or unpopularity in the country, are subjects of much meditation, but not to be entered upon in this letter.

Ever yours affectionately,

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—You will, of course, understand this whole statement as for yourself alone. What relates in particular to the number of offices talked of on both sides, to the giving a list, &c., I have not mentioned it, nor shall I to any of those who are personally concerned in the transaction.

The new arrangements referred to in this letter were as follows—Lord Howick* succeeded Mr. Fox at the Foreign Office, and as leader of the House of Commons; Mr. Grenville became First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Sidmouth, President of the Council; and Lord Holland, Privy Seal.

In these negotiations somewhat more stress is laid upon *persons* than upon principles. But in the state into which parties had become resolved, there was no longer any difference upon, at that time, the all-important point—viz., of the necessity for carrying on the contest, if peace could not be obtained on safe and honourable terms. It had ceased to be as it was at the beginning of the war, when Mr. Windham (in 1794) declined to enter into an argument with Mr. Fox upon the propriety of continuing it, because, as he said, 'We do not come *near* enough to each other to have a difference of opinion upon this point.'

Silly people [said Mr. Canning, in a private letter] laughed at what he said, as a refinement without force or meaning; but it was very just and sensible, in spite of the silly people and their laughter. In plain practical English, what he meant is this: A person who thinks that a thing ought not to be done at all on any account, is not the person with whom I, thinking directly otherwise, can dispute to any good purpose upon the *time* and *mode* of doing it; or, in language still more practical, There is some sense in two

---

* Afterwards Earl Grey.

men debating which is the better road to take, if they are both going to London; but the demon of discord himself could suggest no satisfactory ground for their debate, if one was setting out for London and the other for York.

The prosecution of the war with *effect* (if peace were hopeless) absorbed the energies of all; men of all parties, therefore, could sit in council together to discuss the best 'time' and the best 'mode' of carrying it on. 'Had Mr. Pitt's friends' become members of Lord Grenville's Cabinet, Mr. Canning had no reason to fear, if they joined in such numbers as to give a fair weight to their practical advice, that that advice would not have been approved by the other members of the Cabinet, especially by its chief, whose earnest efforts (here detailed) to obtain Mr. Canning's assistance proved the great value which he set upon it. Of this negotiation, Lord Malmesbury says, 'Lord Grenville offered splendidly to Canning, but Canning remained steady from principle.' Elsewhere Lord M. observes, 'He may be safely trusted, for, I repeat, he is honourable and honest.'

CHAPTER IX.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRENVILLE ADMINISTRATION—PRUSSIA—DISMISSAL OF THAT MINISTRY BY THE KING—FORMATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DUKE OF PORTLAND.

THE first step of Lord Grenville's Ministry, after the changes consequent on Mr. Fox's death, was to dissolve Parliament. The elections took place in the autumn, and Parliament met on the 15th. of December (1806), for the despatch of business.

About three weeks before the meeting, Mr. Canning thus explained his view of the state of domestic politics, after the negotiations between him and Lord Grenville had terminated. But, in order that the allusions which the letter contains may be clearly understood, it must be borne in mind, that some leading members of the Pitt party had formed a notion, that his Majesty's sentiments were not friendly to his then servants; that he would dismiss them if he could; and that, if they asked him to dissolve Parliament, he would deny them the necessary authority. It will be seen by the following, that in this notion Mr. Canning did not concur.

South Hill, Nov. 21, 1806.

MY DEAR BORINGDON,

I do not see any absolute necessity for your coming up before the end of the month. Nothing can be done in either House for the first week after the meeting, and I imagine it cannot be much less than a week after the King's speech, before there can be anything in the House of Lords, which

will require attendance. But 'the beginning of the next month' is rather too indefinite an expression, as it might carry you beyond the time when action must (if ever) begin. It certainly is the intention of Government to press forward business in the very early part of the session.

My opinion is, that with all the disposition of a fair termination of hostilities with Lord G., whenever it is proposed by him on admissible terms, the only satisfactory way of leading to any such proposal is by vigorous exertion in Parliament. Whether that exertion can be made usefully to extend to the House of Lords, or must be confined to the House of Commons, is a point which cannot well be ascertained till one has had an opportunity of hearing other people's opinions. I do not mean that my opinion, in the main, is liable to be changed by theirs, but their co-operation, of course, will depend on the coincidence of their opinion with that which I have formed. And, indeed, there are many subjects of discussion in the House of Commons in which the Lords can take no share.

The late elections have produced some of this sort; and they have, I am afraid, upon the whole, so soured men's minds, that any question of amicable arrangement would come under great disadvantage to be discussed now; and, if it comes at all, must grow out of a new state of things *subsequently* to the meeting of the new Parliament.

I have no doubt that you will find Lord W.* in Lord E.'s† politics; and, in that case, I think it right, by all means, to let him see plainly what you feel, and what is felt by others, of the complete overthrow of the plan of last year by the dissolution; but taking care (as I have uniformly) to mix nothing that can be mistaken for an expression of resentment towards the highest quarter, but to contend that those who relied upon a different conduct there, must have deceived themselves—most unaccountably to be sure, but they must have done so, before they deceived others.

---

* Westmorland. † Eldon.

I am particularly anxious to give you this caution, because in talking upon this subject with one or two persons lately, I have found a disposition to shift the blame to the K., as if he had authorized assurances which he did not act up to, and then to defend *him only* on the ground of his having been taken by surprise. The defence would be good for nothing, if the charge were true; but I am satisfied the charge is unfounded, and that the reports, which we received of his designs were, in fact, no more than the embodied wishes of their reporters.

You did nothing wrong in talking with Huskisson; but you were wrong, unintentionally, in a fact, for I did *not* send what you saw written to P.*

After a few days' delay I began to think that such a statement, uncalled for by anything on his part, would be better let alone—that I should infallibly have opportunities enough to make my sentiments known, and that it would be more satisfactory to do so, upon invitation, than to appear to seek an opportunity, as if there was something that I felt it necessary to say as soon as possible. This is not the case—far from it. The recollection of what passed, in February last, between me and Castlereagh and Perceval, ought to make them perfectly aware (and through them Hawkesbury, and every other person on whose behalf they spoke) of what *must* now be my view of the state of parties, and political objects in general. If their game superseded mine last year, it is to be taken for granted that theirs is played out—that I, at least, revert to my own, and it is for them to decide whether they will go with me, or to suggest what other more expedient and more creditable one they may have to propose.

I saw Castlereagh in town the day before yesterday. He was very desirous of ascertaining my opinions and intentions, and I was perfectly unreserved in the explanation of them. After ruminating upon them he will communicate with Perceval, and, perhaps, with Hawkesbury, and I

* Perceval.

think it probable I shall hear from one or other of them soon.

I have the strongest assurances almost every week (to-day, for instance, I have one letter) from Lord Lowther, to his adherence to whatever line of conduct may be thought best, and his readiness to come up at or before the meeting, on his hearing from me.

Lord Camden, I apprehend, is disposed to gibb (or jibb, should it be written?), and therefore it is that I am, above all things, desirous that there should be some vigorous proceeding in Parliament, previous to any accommodation, even if accommodation were (which it is not and cannot be) within reach, at this moment—to discriminate those who deserve to be considered, from others, who consider nobody but themselves.

I have, therefore, encouraged Castlereagh to urge Lord Camden to every possible extravagance of hostility, but I have no doubt to little purpose. He has been canvassing for the Government candidate in Kent!

All our knowing people agree that the elections in general have not gone well for the Government, which is surprising when I look at the many notorious instances in which they have been successful. Rose says they will 'not gain twenty,' and Long* 'not above ten;' and their *case* at the meeting of Parliament to be sure is not a triumphant one. What must Lord Grenville feel at being involved in such difficulties, and with such companions!

Yours, G. C.

The 'difficulties' to which Mr. Canning here alludes were various. With the exception of the capture of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the brilliant victory of Maida, gained by Sir John Stuart in Calabria, the British arms had been everywhere either unsuccessful, or the objects sought by them had not been attained. At Alexandria and Buenos Ayres they had been

* Late Lord Farnborough.

actually defeated; at Constantinople, notwithstanding the brave passage of the Dardanelles by the fleet under the command of Sir John Duckworth, the expedition retired, after an abortive threat to bombard the city; and even in Calabria, from the wild and impracticable character of the insurgents whom the British forces were sent to assist, Sir John Stuart thought it prudent to withdraw, having reaped no advantage from his victory, except the *prestige* which the British army derived from having proved triumphant in a contest with the conquering, and, as many then supposed, the invincible armies of France.

But these were only minor incidents in the great strife which was then shaking the world with its arms. While Mr. Fox's negotiations for peace were going on at Paris, Napoleon was crushing one of the great Powers of Europe. Within the short space of two months, the Prussian Monarchy was all but extinguished!

At the Peace of Presburg, which resulted from the defeat at Austerlitz, Prussia (who had stood by, whilst her neighbour and ancient rival, Austria, was being conquered by Napoleon) had been compelled to cede to the French Emperor certain territories which belonged to her. For these she was persuaded to accept, as an indemnity, Hanover, the hereditary dominions of our King, of which Napoleon then held hostile possession. Nothing can excuse the Prussian Ministers for having persuaded their royal master to commit this act of bad faith, and at the same time to adopt towards his natural, and (at that time, his) actual ally, the hostile measure of shutting the ports of Hanover against British ships. On the 23rd of

April (1806), in consequence of these proceedings on the part of Prussia, Mr. Fox had brought down a Message from the Throne, declaring war against Prussia. In his speech on that occasion, he said:—

> We ought to make a signal example of Prussia, and, whatever principles theorists may lay down about restoring the balance of Europe, I think we shall do more to restore the sound and true principles which ought to prevail in Europe, by showing the world, in this instance, that this country will not abandon them herself, nor consent that they shall be departed from by other nations in their transactions with her.

The view which Mr. Canning took of this war was this:—'He had not the slightest doubt of its justice;' but, 'after the dissolution of the Confederacy' (the one of which Mr. Pitt had been the animating genius, and which Austerlitz overthrew), 'considering the 'state in which Russia and Prussia stood, what '(he asked) was the clear and obvious policy of 'France, and what of England? I will state it fairly. 'No man can hesitate to say that, unfortunate as that 'Confederacy was—broken and disjointed as it might 'be—yet were its scattered limbs not without life and 'vigour. It was, therefore, the clear and obvious 'policy of England to unite those divided parts, and 'to endeavour to produce an energetic whole. On 'the other hand, it was the clear and obvious policy 'of France to effect a complete dismemberment of 'the Confederation, and (if that could not be com-'pletely accomplished in reality), at least, to accom-'plish it in appearance. So, France, by a nominal 'and illusive transfer of Hanover to Prussia, planted 'a cause of dissension between Prussia and Great 'Britain. It was a contrivance of the enemy. France

'found Great Britain and Prussia in amity, with a 'tendency to coalesce; and so she tried to divide 'them by a pretended transfer, in order to create a 'war between the two countries.

'Prussia, unable to resist the power of France, thus 'encroached on us: we had, however, the option to 'pass over the just cause of complaint which we pos- 'sessed in consequence, and to leave untouched the 'only Power in Europe which appeared capable of 'being the germ of a hostile alliance against France. 'But the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers had been 'the converse of this policy. By their conduct, Prus- 'sia had been compelled to act without our advice 'and assistance, and to plunge into a war, of which, 'if our advice could not have prevented it, our assist- 'ance might have meliorated the termination.

'Would any man of common reflection say that, if 'the restoration of Hanover were the sole object, it 'was worth while to war against Prussia. The Bri- 'tish Government had, however, continued at war 'with her, so long as her resources were unimpaired, 'and her strength unexhausted; but as soon as there 'seemed a prospect of a war between France and 'Prussia, an ambassador, Lord Morpeth (no man 'was better fitted for the office, both from the quali- 'ties of his head and heart) was despatched to Berlin, 'with instructions adapted to all possibilities, except 'that which was most probable—namely, that the 'war had actually commenced. For *that*, no provision 'had been made; an event of which the most com- 'mon information might have shown them the like- 'lihood. As soon, however, as Lord Morpeth returned, 'our Government began to perceive their error, and

'to think that there really was something like a war 'between France and Prussia—by the trifling cir- 'cumstance that the Prussian army was annihilated! 'They then sent a few military men to their aid; and 'when the Prussian Monarchy shall be destroyed, 'they will perhaps send an army!'*

These observations render intelligible the following letter, which was written a fortnight before the speech was delivered:—

My dear Boringdon, South Hill, Dec. 7, 1806.

I have not the slightest interest with the *Courier*.† I had already written to Morpeth to that effect, before I received your letter. I abjured two years and a half ago (at the formation of Pitt's Government) all connexion or intercourse with the gentlemen of the press, for ever; and, since that time, with the exception of one paragraph, which I remember you saw me write at Frere's (which was a sober contradiction of the story of the formation of an Opposition at Jinksbury's), and which was sent to Sturges,‡ rather as the substance of what it would be right to have said somehow or other, than as a direct communication for the *Courier*, I never have violated my vow in a single instance. Of course, therefore, I cannot express any wish about the omission or insertion of any particular topic. *That*, if complied with, would give the editor a claim to know my opinion as to what topics were safe and advisable; and it would, besides, entail upon one a certain degree of responsibility for anything personally offensive to others, which one might not be able to check.

I have had my share of newspaper abuse, and am growing callous to it. And, for aught I see, other public men must make up their minds in the same way.

---

* Canning's *Speech*, Dec. 19, 1806.

† The *Courier* had been attacking Lord Morpeth.

‡ Mr. Sturges Bourne, afterwards Home Secretary.

I am afraid that checking the *Courier*, if that were possible, would not of itself be enough to set *M.** entirely at ease. I was in town, for a few days, last week, and I really never heard so general and decided an opinion—an opinion I have good reason to believe not discouraged, but rather propagated by the Government. I certainly heard it from some who live in the most familiar habits with them.

I am myself in very great difficulty upon the subject, as to the House of Commons. If I could avoid the Prussian question altogether, it would only be to throw it into other hands: and *M.'s* tardy mission and return make so prominent a part of the business, that it is almost impossible wholly to omit them. The fault I throw upon his instructions, wholly exculpating him. As to the business itself, I really search my recollection in vain for any so complete and fatal series of blunders and mismanagements, as that which has marked the whole conduct of this Government towards Prussia, from that so-much-cried-up speech of Fox's in April (of which, do me the justice to remember, I never was the dupe, or the panegyrist), which announced our having determined to throw Prussia under the feet of France, to this last measure of sending a Minister *just too* late to see France trample her to pieces.

Oh! that, as at first intended, little Petty† had been the Minister, instead of Morpeth!

I am not surprised that you should hardly believe the possibility of any one overlooking the obvious effects of the dissolution. But such I have found to be the case with the friends of Government in general; and with the intimate friends of the Court. Of the latter description some, of course, affect not to see what, in truth, appears plainly enough to them; but others are really without a suspicion. For the Government I account thus, that *they* never doubted their own power, and are, therefore, not particularly struck with the exercise of it in this instance.

---

* Lord Morpeth, Mr. Canning's intimate friend.

† Lord Henry Petty, present Marquis of Lansdowne.

Long's canvass of the Parliament is not very different from that which I mentioned to you. Government, according to him, gain twelve as against us, but, *per contra*, they have eleven *doubtfuls*, where they had staunch friends before. Lord Grenville does not gain so much over the Foxites as was first imagined, but, between them, they make an example of the Doctor.

Ever yours affectionately,

G. C.

The Grenville Ministry was not however destined to fall through any parliamentary defeat. A cause very similar to that which produced Mr. Pitt's retirement in 1801, operated in bringing about their dismissal—viz. an attempt to make further concessions to the Roman Catholics. Mr. Fox (as appears in the *Life of Lord Sidmouth**) had determined to respect the King's conscientious opinions upon this subject; and his lordship records that Mr. Fox said to Count Stahremberg, when he first came into office, in reply to the inquiry, 'Have you no difficulty respecting 'the Roman Catholic question?' 'None at all. I 'am determined not to annoy my Sovereign by bring-'ing it forward.'† But his colleagues after his death did not consider themselves to be so fettered. They accordingly, in the beginning of March, 1807, introduced into the House of Commons a Bill for securing to all his Majesty's subjects 'the privilege of serving in the army and navy.' Lord Howick thus explained it:—

In consequence of an Act passed in Ireland, 1793, the

* Vol. ii. p. 435.

† This fact George IV. stated to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Manners Sutton) and the Bishop of London (Howley) in 1827.

Roman Catholics of that country were enabled to hold commissions in the army, and to attain any rank except that of Commander-in-Chief, Master-General of the Ordnance, or General on the Staff. The effect of this permission, so granted to the Roman Catholics in Ireland, was a most striking incongruity. For if a Roman Catholic, who was by law qualified to serve in the army of Ireland, should be sent to this country by any circumstance which required the services of his regiment here, he would be disqualified by law from remaining in the service.

If this had been all that the Ministers proposed, the King would have made no objection, as he at first gave his assent to the measure: but the Act went further, and freed the Romanists from the exceptions to which they were left subjected by the Irish Act of 1793. Lord Grenville, however, stated, that 'the 'difference between the law of 1793 and the one they 'meant to propose, was pointed out to the King, 'and that his Majesty, after some objections, gave 'his consent that the measure should be proposed.' Communications were accordingly made to Mr. Elliott, the Irish Secretary, and some doubts having arisen necessitating further correspondence, a delay occurred, during which both the King and Lord Sidmouth, when reflecting on what was then proposed, became fully aware of its extent: both therefore objected to it in very decided terms; the latter tendering his resignation to Lord Grenville, that he might oppose it in Parliament.

The measure was accordingly reduced to what the King seems to have imagined that he originally agreed to—viz. to make the law correspond with itself in England and Ireland; in this shape the King would

have consented to its passing. But the Cabinet subsequently resolved to withdraw the Bill altogether: Lord Grenville and Lord Howick reserving to themselves the right, by a minute of Cabinet, submitted to the King, (1) To avow that they were in favour of the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities. (2) To renew this, or to propose any other measure connected with the subject as they might think advisable. This alarmed the King, and he demanded from them a promise in writing, that they would not again discuss this question, or any part of it, in the Cabinet.

This demand they declined to comply with. On which his Majesty told them that he should call others to his councils.

His Majesty was doubtless aware when he took this decided step, that the Duke of Portland would, if asked, undertake the formation of a Ministry; but it seems hardly credible that his Grace (as has been asserted) could have gone the length of writing to his Sovereign to 'offer to form a new Administra-'tion, in the event of the resignation of Ministers, if 'his Majesty refused his assent to the bill, which the 'Duke advised him to do.'

Such a course would have been very unconstitutional, and would have manifested a presumption on the part of the Duke, of which, from all the accounts of his Grace's character, he was the last man likely to be guilty. Besides, the bill was not one in itself to which the Duke would probably have been opposed; and if he thought the Ministers in the wrong, it was not because they proposed such a bill, but because they pressed the King too strongly on his conscientious objections.

It is certain that Mr. Canning knew nothing of the step imputed to the Duke; for in a confidential letter to Lord Boringdon, dated the 15th March, he expresses his great 'desire that Lord Grenville 'should retain his situation by proper concession 'to the King,' maintaining, however, his belief that the Duke of Portland was ready 'to take the Govern-'ment, if necessary, and his own persuasion that it 'could go on, if the Doctor did not form a part of it.'

The following sentence occurs in the same letter:—

I was with the D. of P. last night for two or three hours; and am now confident that he *would* undertake the Government. I have endeavoured to impress upon him those considerations with regard to 'the Doctor,' which I think most likely to have weight with him, and which I really believe to be perfectly true—the little good, and the great harm, that a connexion with the Sidmouth party would do us.

In a P.S., he says,

I am *afraid* you are not far from wrong in your estimate of the K.'s partiality for 'the Doctor.'

An accommodation, however, between the King and his Ministers became impossible, after they had set forth their own pretensions, and had refused to comply with his request to withdraw them. His Majesty was personally offended, and adopted the unusual course of not granting them an audience of leave, in order to mark his displeasure. To Lord Sidmouth, and those of his colleagues who had sided with him, he alone conceded this distinction.

A new Ministry was accordingly installed. The Duke of Portland, Premier; Lord Hawkesbury, Home, and Lord Castlereagh War, Secretaries; Mr. Perceval, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House

of Commons; Sir Arthur Wellesley, Chief Secretary for Ireland; and Mr. Huskisson, Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Canning thus communicates his own destiny to his friend:—

Foreign Office, Downing-street,
March 25, 1807.

MY DEAR BORINGDON,

As my fate was not decided till two o'clock to-day, you may possibly not yet know that I am at the Foreign Office, and will, perhaps, be pleased to receive from myself the assurance that I am so.

Ever yours, G. C.

CHAPTER X.

THE PEACE OF TILSIT, AND THE EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN, 1807.

MR. CANNING was now in a position which gave him a full opportunity of exerting his best energies for the public good.

It was a perilous time; those who are not old enough to remember it, can have little idea of the excited state of men's minds, conscious of present ill, but dreading a worse future. Prussia having been all but annihilated, Russia had to contend, in the north of Europe, single-handed with Napoleon. She had also on her hands a Turkish war. The Continent was at the feet of the French Emperor.

But, great and unexampled as were the difficulties and dangers that surrounded this country, Mr. Canning's heart did not quail before them. At the meeting of Parliament, in his amendment to the Address, he had recorded the opinion that his Majesty 'possessed in the wealth and prosperity of his domi-'nions, in the loyalty and firmness of his Parliament, 'in the bravery of his fleets and armies, and in the 'affection, zeal, and courage of his people, resources 'which, if wisely called forth, and diligently and 'judiciously applied, were amply sufficient to insure 'the safety and honour of the British Empire, and to 'maintain the only hope, under Divine Providence,

'for the restoration of the liberties and happiness of 'mankind.'

The state of affairs, however, became worse very shortly after the accession to office of the new Ministry; for, within three months of that event, the Russian army was so completely defeated at Friedland, on the 14th of June, that the Emperor of Russia agreed to an armistice on the 22nd, and further consented to meet his conqueror in conference at Tilsit; the meeting accordingly took place on the 24th of the same month.

At this memorable interview between the Emperors, the ordinary forms of diplomacy were laid aside, and the two Monarchs discussed and settled, *vivâ voce*, the important matters which were to be arranged between them. The meeting (either the better to preserve the appearance of equality, or because both so far distrusted each other as to be unwilling to place their persons in each other's power) took place on a raft moored in the middle of the river Niemen. It was there that Napoleon put forth all the fascinations of his marvellous genius, and succeeded in obtaining such a powerful ascendency over the mind of Alexander, as to convert his foe into his warm admirer; he also contrived so to prejudice Alexander against the British alliance, that he agreed to join in Napoleon's designs for the complete overthrow of British power.

The Treaty of Tilsit was then settled. There were several secret articles, which were to be most carefully concealed from the world. When, however, these mighty men were, as they thought, alone, and each gave way

to the unreserved expression to each other, if not of their real sentiments, at any rate to what they intended should bear to each other the appearance of being so, an individual was concealed behind a curtain of the tent, and was a secret witness of that most curious conversation. He then and there heard Napoleon propose to Alexander, and Alexander consent to the proposition, that the French should take possession of the powerful fleet of Denmark, which was lying in the waters of Copenhagen.

The individual who thus acquired a knowledge of this bargain, lost no time in communicating it to the British Government, and gave such proofs of the accuracy of his intelligence, as left no doubt of its truth in Mr. Canning's mind.

The difficulty, however, in dealing with the information was immense. England was at peace with Denmark; how, therefore, could she contrive to withdraw so powerful an instrument of attack on herself out of Danish hands? If it were not done, it was certain that, in a few weeks, it would be turned against her, either with, or without the consent of Denmark. There was no reason, moreover, from the past, to calculate on her adhesion to the British cause. In stirring up the 'armed neutrality' of 1780, she had been an active agent; and but a few months after she had declared her abandonment of the principles on which the 'armed neutrality' was founded, she again entered into a league against Great Britain. No reliance, therefore, could be placed on the friendly feelings of Denmark; supposing even that, had she entertained them, her weakness would not have pre-

vented her from acting upon them. The fleets of France, Spain, and Denmark united, would have formed a force, which even England, with all the *prestige* of her naval victories, was not in a position to despise. With the whole Continent united against her, there was certainly no inconsiderable danger, that Buonaparte might fulfil his threat to destroy our commerce, and to run down our navy.

In a struggle for life and death (for such was the real character of the contest) could a British Ministry, consistently with their first duty to provide for the safety of their own country, run the hazard of leaving in the enemy's hands those instruments which he might have wielded to our ruin?

From every fact bearing on the conduct of Denmark in dealing with French power, it was evident that, whether from predilection or necessity, the Danish Government had no power of election between England and France; there was no choice, no discussion, no reasoning upon the subject.

Moreover, Lord Howick (Mr. Canning's immediate predecessor in the Foreign Office) had instructed Mr. Garlicke, the British Envoy at Copenhagen, explicitly to declare to the Danish Government, that 'his Majesty could never, in the event of Denmark 'submitting to the control of France, suffer either 'the whole, or a part of her navy, to be placed at the 'disposal of France.'

With the awful responsibility of the knowledge that the safety of his country depended on his sagacity and firmness, Mr. Canning had no hesitation in determining the course which it was his

duty to pursue. This resolve once taken, he resolutely pursued it. He lost no time in submitting to the Cabinet his plan of operations to prevent the Danish fleet from falling into Napoleon's power, and from being turned against us.

The first object was to obtain possession of the fleet with the least possible injury and annoyance to Denmark. Mr. Canning therefore required that such an overpowering force should be sent as would give the Court of Denmark a sufficient excuse to its own subjects for yielding to our demands: and also to Napoleon, lest he should suspect Denmark to be in collusion with England, and should follow up his suspicion by taking his revenge upon her. At the same time the force was to be ample, and more than ample, to accomplish the object, if the Danish Government refused compliance with our demands.

Those demands were a surrender of the fleet in the harbour of Copenhagen, to be returned at the conclusion of a peace in as perfect repair as when it was surrendered.

Early in August the armament set forth. Before the 22nd of that month the following brief note shows that Mr. Canning was expecting some intelligence of its progress:—

MY DEAR BORINGDON, Foreign Office, Aug. 22, 1807.

Nothing yet. It is very extraordinary, and very, very anxious.

G. C.

On the 2nd of September, in reply to a question whether any time had been lost, he writes:—

Foreign Office, Sept. 2, 1807.

No, I do not think any time has been lost, except what was lost by the wind on the 14th and 15th being against the disembarkation. This certainly gave the Danes two additional days for preparation, but they seem to have turned their attention almost wholly to the sea batteries.

Jackson* arrived at Copenhagen on the 13th, and left it the next day for the fleet. He writes to me (privately) in the fullest confidence of success.

G. C.

Ten days after this (although the bombardment was over, and the capitulation took place on the 4th of September) Mr Canning was still in suspense as to the success or failure of the expedition. He thus writes :—

My dear Boringdon, Foreign Office, Sept. 12, 1807.

We have private letters to the 28th. Nothing done yet. But still the letters are written in good spirits. They appear to have been trusted to chance conveyances. From Gambier† there is nothing but his journal (corresponding in date with Lord Cathcart); from Lord Cathcart not a line.

It is a most wearing suspense. It is wonderful how little our officers and ministers at a distance appear to calculate the impatience of the public at home.

Yes,—it is too late for the promenade to Cronstadt; and upon reconsideration, I am inclined to think it better omitted (for reasons too long to detail); but there is something else that may be done in the same sense (at least I hope so), and not liable to the same objections.

Meantime we have had news from Buenos Ayres. There is an end of that expedition,‡ and if it were not for the loss with which the event has been attended, I am not

---

* The diplomatist employed to negotiate with Denmark.

† Lord Gambier, who commanded the fleet.

‡ Under General Whitelock.

quite sure that I should regret the evacuation; but do not say so.

We have now no military operations of our predecessors of which to expect the result. Constantinople, Egypt, and Buenos Ayres, form the sum of their achievements.

I am going this evening to Claremont* to get two quiet days for my American answer (which is now called for), and the Danish declaration.

Yours, G. C.

By the 16th of September Mr. Canning's anxiety appears to have been relieved, by the complete success of the expedition.

Foreign Office, Sept 16, 1807,
Half-past Six.

MY DEAR BORINGDON,

I can add nothing to the *Gazette*, except that Gambier and Lord Cathcart have executed their original instructions to a miracle, and improved upon them, as you see, with the soundest discretion, by getting the fleet *unconditionally*, and adding to it the frigates, &c., and the contents of the arsenal. The new instructions had not reached them. But I have no time for more.

Yours affectionately, G. C.

The vessels of war surrendered, consisted of 18 sail of the line, 15 frigates, and 31 brigs and gun-boats.

The 'Danish declaration,' to which Mr. Canning refers, is so clear and succinct a statement of the case of this country that it is impossible to abridge it without leaving out some material point: it is therefore subjoined *in extenso*:—

His Majesty owes to himself and to Europe a frank exposition of the motives which have dictated his late measures in the Baltic.

* Then the seat of Mr. Charles Ellis, afterwards Lord Seaford. Subsequently it became the property of Prince Leopold and the Princess Charlotte.

His Majesty has delayed this exposition, only in the hope of that more amicable arrangement with the Court of Denmark which it was H. M.'s first wish and endeavour to obtain, for which he was ready to make great efforts and great sacrifices, and of which he never lost sight even in the moment of the most decisive hostility.

Deeply as the disappointment of this hope has been felt by H. M., he has the consolation of reflecting that no exertion was left untried on his part to produce a different result; and, while he laments the cruel necessity which has obliged him to have recourse to acts of hostility against a nation, with which it was H. M.'s most earnest desire to have established the relations of common interest and alliance, H. M. feels confident, that in the eyes of Europe and of the world a justification of his conduct will be found in the commanding and indispensable duty (paramount to all others among the obligations of a sovereign) of providing, while there was yet time, for the immediate security of his people.

H. M. had received the most positive information of the determination of the present ruler of France to occupy with a military force the territory of Holstein, for the purpose of excluding Great Britain from all her accustomed channels of communication with the Continent, of inducing, or compelling the Court of Denmark to close the passage of the Sound against British commerce and navigation, and of availing himself of the aid of the Danish marine for the invasion of Great Britain and Ireland.

Confident as H. M. was of the sources from which this intelligence was derived, and confirmed in the credit which he gave to it, as well by the notorious and repeated declarations of the enemy, and by his recent occupation of the towns and territories of other neutral states, as by the preparations actually made for collecting a hostile force upon the frontiers of his Danish M.'s continental dominions, H. M. would yet willingly have forborne to act upon this intelligence, until the complete and practical disclosure of the plans had made manifest to all the world the absolute necessity of resisting it.

H. M. did forbear, as long as there could be a doubt of the urgency of the danger, or a hope of an effectual counteraction to it, in the means, or in the dispositions of Denmark.

But H. M. could not but recollect, that when, at the close of the former war, the Court of Denmark engaged in an hostile confederacy against Great Britain, the apology offered by that Court for so unjustifiable an abandonment of a neutrality which H. M. had never ceased to respect, was founded on its avowed inability to resist the operation of external influence, and the threats of a formidable neighbouring Power. His Majesty could not but compare the degree of influence which, at that time, determined the decision of the Court of Denmark, in violation of positive engagements, solemnly contracted but six months before, with the increased operations which France had now the means of giving to the same principle of intimidation, with kingdoms prostrate at her feet, with a population of nations under her banners.

Nor was the danger less imminent than certain. Already the army destined for the invasion of Holstein was assembling on the violated territory of neutral Hamburg, and Holstein, once occupied, the island of Zealand was at the mercy of France, the navy of Denmark at her disposal.

It is true a British force might have found its way into the Baltic, and checked, for a time, the movements of the Danish marine, but the season was approaching when that precaution would no longer have availed; when H. M.'s fleet must have retired from that sea, and permitted France, in undisturbed security, to accumulate the means of offence against H. M.'s dominions.

Yet, even under these circumstances, in calling upon Denmark for the satisfaction and security which H. M. was compelled to require, and in demanding the only pledge by which security could be rendered effectual, the *temporary* possession of that fleet, which was the chief inducement to France for forcing Denmark into hostilities with Great Britain, H. M. had accompanied this demand with the offer of every condition which could tend to reconcile it to the interests and the feelings of the Court of Denmark.

It was for Denmark herself to state the terms and stipulations which she might require.

If Denmark was apprehensive that the surrender of her fleet would be resented by France, as an act of connivance, H. M. had prepared a force of such formidable magnitude as must have made concession justifiable, even in the estimation of France, by rendering resistance altogether unavailing.

If Denmark was really prepared to resist the demands of France, and to maintain her independence, H. M. proffered his co-operation for her defence—naval, military, and pecuniary aid—a guarantee of her European territories, and the security and extension of her colonial possessions.

That the sword has been drawn in the execution of a service indispensable to the safety of H. M.'s dominions, is matter of sincere and painful regret to H. M. That the state and circumstances of the world are such as to have required and justified measures of self-preservation to which H. M. has found himself in the necessity of resorting, is a truth which H. M. deeply deplores, but for which he is in no degree responsible.

H. M. has long carried on a most unequal contest, with scrupulous forbearance, against unrelenting violence and oppression; but that forbearance has its bounds. When the design was openly avowed, and already but too far advanced towards its accomplishment, of subjecting the Powers of Europe to one universal usurpation, and of combining them, by terror or by force, against the maritime rights and political existence of this kingdom, it became necessary for H. M. to anticipate the success of a system, not more fatal to his interests, than to those of the Powers who were destined to be the instruments of its execution.

It was time that the effects of that dread which France has inspired into the nations of the world should be counteracted by an exertion of the power of Great Britain, called forth by the exigency of the crisis, and in proportion to the magnitude of the danger.

Notwithstanding the declaration of war on the part of the Danish Government, it still remains for Denmark to deter-

mine whether war shall continue between the two nations. H. M. still proffers an amicable arrangement. He is anxious to sheath the sword, which he has been most reluctantly compelled to draw. He is ready to demonstrate to Denmark, and to the world, that, having acted solely upon the sense of what was due to the security of his own dominions, he is not desirous, from any other motive, or any object of advantage and aggrandizement, to carry measures of hostility beyond the limits of the necessity which has produced them.

Westminster, Sept. 25, 1807.

Five days after the publication of this declaration Mr Canning writes the following private letter:—

MY DEAR BORINGDON, Foreign Office, Sept. 30, 1807.

I have been so overwhelmed with work since the arrival of the news of our success at Copenhagen, that I have not had time to write to anybody.

To-morrow I get three great batches of instructions off my hands, and then I look for a little breathing time.

In the meanwhile I will answer your questions.

I certainly wish that the capitulation had been without that article,* though I have great doubts of our being able to keep Zealand (indeed, with our *own* means, we could not), but it straitens us too much in point of time. This is the evil which, *per fas aut nefas*, (so far as negotiation goes, for we will *do* nothing wicked), I have been labouring to remedy. If we can get a peace with Denmark, without further bloodshed, and procure an assurance for her real neutrality by the guarantee of Russia, *we* remaining *plus* the Danish fleet and Heligoland, I think the business will have ended, upon the whole, tolerably well; and *that* I have been trying to accomplish.

It was at this juncture that the Emperor of Russia

* The surrender of Zealand.

had conveyed to the British Ministers his secret satisfaction at their proceedings at Copenhagen. Mr. Canning, in continuing the same letter, thus refers to it:—

As to Russia, I never had a doubt. It was one of the recommendations of the enterprise to me, that it was sure (if successful) to *stun* Russia into her senses again. It has done so. But I do not build more upon her sudden recovery, any more than I desponded too much upon her temporary intoxication. We must make advantage of the interval of reason and good-will, if it should turn out to be *but* an interval; and if it is the recommencement of a better system, I still do not wish to hurry her into acting upon it too soon.

On the contrary, I think great use may be made of Buonaparte's deference for Russia; and that the *onus* of finding fault may be thrown upon *him*, just as he *now* finds himself (to his infinite surprise, no doubt) the champion of the laws of nations, and the rights of neutrality, in respect to Denmark.

I apprehend that to do by him, as nearly as possible, what he has been so long doing by others, is the best chance of bringing him to reason in the end.

I am glad you like the Declaration. It seems to make fortune; and I never was (as you may guess) so anxious about any *child* of my pen, as about this.

Dean* Jackson has sent me a very gracious commendation.

Yours affectionately,

G. C.

Mr. Canning was wise in not 'building too much upon the sudden recovery of Russia;' for whether the agent employed by the Emperor exceeded his instructions, whether his Imperial Majesty was waver-

* Of Christ Church.

ing in his own mind (as is the most probable solution of the point) as to the policy of carrying out the stipulations at Tilsit against England, or whether the instructions were given with a view to deceive, it cannot probably now be accurately determined; but, it is certain, that by the month of November the Czar had made up his mind to break entirely with England—to condemn our conduct at Copenhagen—to proclaim anew the principles of the 'armed neutrality,' and to impose an embargo on British vessels in Russian ports. This last measure, however, was carried out (owing to the feelings of the Russian nation not to give irreparable offence to England) with such a degree of leniency as enabled British vessels to depart before, and some even after, the ukase had proclaimed the embargo.

On the 4th of December (1807), Mr. Canning thus writes:—

> The peace of Tilsit is come out. We did not want any more case for Copenhagen; but if we had, this gives it us.
>
> Nobody will be foolish enough to argue (or, at least, to believe his own argument) that the 'armed neutrality' is only the *consequence* of the expedition to Copenhagen; and, if not, where should we have been now, if the armed neutrality had been asserted, with the Danish fleet in the Baltic?

When Parliament met* in the following year, the whole of these proceedings were repeatedly discussed in both Houses. The most opposite views were taken of them, by the speakers on different sides of the House. Some condemned them on the ground of

---

* January 31, 1808.

unjustifiable treatment of a neutral state, and as a breach of international law. This was the view taken of them by Lord Grenville — a statesman whose enlarged views, whose great abilities, and undoubted patriotism, entitle his opinions to great consideration. Earl Grey (Lord Howick) took a similar view of the affair. But, on the other hand, Lord Wellesley warmly approved of the expedition, observing, that

> If it were said, that the junction of the Danish fleet with the French could not create any serious danger to us, it should be remembered that there was a wide difference between the present state of affairs and that previous to the glorious battle of Trafalgar. Then all the Great Powers of the Continent were in arms against France; but at the time of the Copenhagen expedition, the whole of the Continent was subdued—subdued not merely for the purpose of conquest, but for the subjugation of England, through the downfal of her naval supremacy.

Mr. Canning was attacked in the House of Commons for having cited a passage from Lord Howick's instructions to Mr. Garlicke, in a way to make it convey a different meaning from that which the context would have given it. Upon this, Mr. Canning, who had refused the production of the whole despatch, when asked for, on the 'false assumption that he 'made a charge against Lord Howick, immediately 'granted it, in his own exculpation, to prove that the 'extract he read *was* supported by the context.'

The censures passed on this expedition were mainly made to rest on the want of sufficient information to enable a fair judgment to be formed on the merits of the whole case. The Ministers contended that

it must be judged of by what they had disclosed, which they considered ample to justify their conduct.

I have intentionally [said Mr. Canning] avoided referring to anything in this debate but what was notorious; and if we are asked why we have rested our defence upon precise information, when the events and facts that had since taken place had amply justified our measure, I can only answer, that we have stated that precise ground, because *it is true*, and not because we think it necessary for our justification, to enable the House to judge of the case before it. If any more evidence is thought necessary, let us be condemned; for nothing shall ever extort from us the source from whence we derived our information.*

Twenty years after this speech was made, Mr. Canning pointed out to me the following passage from the posthmuous *Mémoires du Duc d'Otrante* (Fouché), as a justification of the Copenhagen Expedition :—

Vers cette époque on apprit le succès de l'attaque de Copenhague par les Anglais, ce qui fut un premier dérangement aux stipulations de Tilsit, en vertu desquelles la marine de Danemarck devait être mise à la disposition de la France. Depuis la catastrophe de Paul I., je n'avais pas revu Napoléon s'abandonner à de plus violens transports. Ce qui le frappe le plus dans ce vigoureux coup de main, ce fut la promptitude de la resolution du Ministère Anglais. Il soupçonna une nouvelle infidelité dans le secret de son Cabinet, et me chargea de verifier, si cela tenait au dépit d'une récente disgrace.† Je lui representai de nouveau, combien il était difficile dans un si ténébreux dédale, de rien pénétrer que par instinct et par conjecture. 'Il faudrait,' lui dis-je, 'que les traitres voulussent se trahir eux mêmes;

* February 3, 1808.

† That of Talleyrand.

car la police ne sait jamais que ce qu'on lui dit; et ce que le hazard lui découvre est peu de chose.*

Lord Liverpool, as well as Mr. Canning, expressed their conviction to me that these *Mémoires* (of which the first volume only was then published) were the genuine writings of Fouché; and that, allowing for the bias of their author, in matters bearing on himself, they were, in points on which he was not so biassed, perfectly authentic.

* Vol. i. p. 362, 2nd ed.

CHAPTER XI.

NAPOLEON'S BERLIN AND MILAN DECREES — THE BRITISH ORDERS IN COUNCIL—WAR AND PEACE WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

AFTER the defeat and overthrow of all the allies of England had been effected by Napoleon, and the Emperors of France and Russia had become undisputed masters of nearly the whole of Europe, the great difficulty with which Napoleon had to contend in prosecuting his designs against England was, in the getting at her so as to inflict injury upon her. The hope of so doing, by means of an invasion of her shores, had been for the time completely crushed at Trafalgar; and when it had begun somewhat to revive, by bringing about the union of the fleets of France, Denmark, and Spain, the blow dealt at Copenhagen once more, for the time, effectually put an end to it. There was, therefore, no common battle field accessible to both nations, on which they could come into collision; for a British army could not venture on the Continent so long as the different European states were united against her; nor could a French fleet venture on the seas without almost the certainty of annihilation, or capture.

In this state of things, the course which presented itself to Napoleon's mind for destroying the maritime supremacy on which British power was based, was,

if possible, to ruin British commerce, on which that supremacy rested. Accordingly, so soon as he had conquered Prussia, and made Russia subservient to his will, he issued his celebrated ordinances, known in history by the name of 'the Berlin and Milan Decrees;' whereby he prohibited along the whole coast of Europe the introduction of all merchandize from Great Britain. The British Government met this attack on British commerce by issuing the no less celebrated 'Orders in Council,' prohibiting goods passing to the Continent by any other course. The coast of Europe was lined with soldiers to enforce the 'Decrees,' whilst the seas were covered with British ships to enforce the 'Orders in Council.' Thus commerce was placed under restrictions from which merchants had no legitimate escape. If goods which had not come from Great Britain were taken to the Continent, they were seized by British cruisers on the seas; if they did come from Great Britain, they were seized by Napoleon's myrmidons on shore.

The policy of these retaliatory measures on the part of this country was much questioned at the time, and led to many long debates; their character is described in the *Annual Register* of 1808, as having 'possessed very little interest,' being universally accounted 'dry, and at length tiresome.' It was remarkable that the condemnation of the policy of these 'orders' came from the Opposition, by whom, when in office, that policy had been originated: for, the first retaliating 'Order in Council' bears date January 7, 1807, more than two months before the accession to office of the Portland Administration.

There is still, as there was at the time, great diversity of opinion as to the effect of these orders; they have been condemned by living Whig authors of the present day, 'as the worst part of the war policy of 'the Tories, and as having led to the most pernicious 'consequences;' and even Tory authorities are to be found by whom the policy of these orders is 'charac-'terized as one of the most unfortunate in point of 'expediency ever adopted by the British Govern-'ment.' And yet, it may well be doubted, whether, even in the view of *expediency* (the *right* being admitted), a measure which caused the disappearance from the ocean of all mercantile ships but those of Great Britain and the United States, and which thus secured to the former nearly the monopoly of the navigation of the world, can well be characterized as having been 'inexpedient' in the middle of a war, in which the independent existence of Great Britain depended on her being able to preserve her maritime supremacy.

The whole of the Continent was shut against British commerce, and, if not nominally under French dominion, was nevertheless compelled to do what Napoleon required. In such a state of things, had those states, which were neutral, possessed unrestricted power of carrying on their commerce with the enemy's ports, it must (if commerce be a source of strength to a nation) have increased the power of France, and in like proportion have enabled her to injure the interests of Britain.

But while these 'decrees' and 'orders' were thus throwing every possible impediment in the way of trade between the nations of Europe and in the

European seas, the United States of America took umbrage with both the contending parties, and passed an Act, called 'the Non-intercourse Act,' which forbad all trading between the States and either of the belligerents, so long as the one enforced the 'decrees' and the other the 'orders.' Intercourse was to be restored with either, whenever either party rescinded, *quoad* the United States, the obnoxious restrictions.

The effect of this Act on the United States was an enormous falling off in the revenue, which depended exclusively on custom duties; at the same time it had the effect of throwing commerce into the hands of the British colony of Canada; British exports to the United States were of course put an end to; but they had never then reached an amount which materially affected our prosperity. At that period, British exports, to Jamaica alone, exceeded by one million British exports to the United States.

The inconvenience suffered by the American people in consequence of the falling off of their trade, had made England unpopular with a very large party; this ill-will had been further heightened by a collision between two ships belonging to their respective navies, the *Chesapeak* and the *Shannon*, in which the British commander was unquestionably in the wrong. Mr. Jefferson, the President, at the time of this occurrence, but whose term was nearly at its close, was very unfavourably disposed towards Great Britain. Mr. Madison, his successor, it was believed, entertained more friendly feelings.

It was in this state of affairs that Mr. Erskine, the British Minister at Washington, was instructed by

Mr. Canning to offer full reparation for the affair of the *Chesapeak*, in order to remove all the grounds of difference between the two countries in a matter on which the United States had right on their side.

Unfortunately, however, in the progress of the negotiations, Mr. Erskine, in his anxiety to heal the differences between the two countries, acted contrary to his instructions, and was led to accept the offer of the American Government to withdraw the 'Non-intercourse Act' with regard to British merchandize, if the British Government would exempt the ships of the United States from the operation of the Orders in Council. This concession Mr. Canning considered as a violation of that rule of maritime law which gives a belligerent the right to prevent neutrals trading with the enemy; and he accordingly thought it his duty to disavow the proceedings of the British envoy, and to recall him.

It is difficult to conceive, considering the course of policy so long pursued by Great Britain on this subject, how Mr. Canning and the Government could have decided differently. In those days no doubt had ever arisen in the minds of English statesmen, that the accepted rule of international law must be highly beneficial in times of war to the interests of those states which were most powerful on the ocean. Had Great Britain endeavoured to incorporate such a rule into the maritime code of nations, because it worked for her own peculiar advantage, she would have used her power tyrannically and unjustly. But, that it is the just rule of international law has not only always been asserted by this country, but has

been confessed by the best and most illustrious of American citizens.

'The captures, made by the British of American 'vessels having French property on board, are war- 'ranted by the law of nations,' was the reply of the Executive Government of the United States, when Washington was President, to 'Citizen' Adet's note, enclosing the decree of the French Directory in 1796. 'The force and operation of this law was contemplated 'by France and the United States, when they formed 'their treaty of commerce; and their special stipula- 'tion on this point was meant as an exception to an 'universal rule. Neither our weakness nor our 'strength has any choice, when the question con- 'cerns the observance of the law of nations.'* Admirable sentiments! worthy of the truly great man by whom they were proclaimed! He well knew that, to secure a strict adherence by all nations to the accepted rules of international law, not only adds to the weight and influence of powerful States, but is the main source of strength to weak ones. Memorable words! that ought to be imprinted on the hearts of the rulers of the world, '*neither our weakness nor our 'strength has any choice, when the question concerns the 'observance of the law of nations!*'

Another great man, on the other side of the waters, high in authority and reputation, has more recently confirmed the doctrine of Washington.

I should apprehend [says Chancellor Kent], this belligerent right to be no longer an open question. The authority and usage on which that right rests in Europe, and the long,

* *An. Reg.* 1796, p. 310.

explicit, and authoritative admission of it by this country, have precluded us from making it a subject of controversy. We are bound, in truth and justice, to submit to its regular exercise in any case, and with any belligerent who does not freely renounce it.

Such is the testimony of honourable men to the actual state of the law; and although that law, they knew to be distasteful to their countrymen, and one which might prove disadvantageous to their interests, yet, to their honour, they did not hesitate to admit and to proclaim it, because they knew it was the truth.

It was only a short time before the concession was made by the British envoy at Washington, that Russia, after the Treaty of Tilsit, had revived the 'armed neutrality' in the Baltic. The question, then, which the British Government had to decide respecting the concession was, not merely would they conciliate the United States by agreeing to it, but would they consent, by so doing, to abandon the principles of international law, for which they had always fought and contended. Would it have been *expedient* to have selected that particular moment of the strife suddenly to concede the principle?

Mr. Canning, then, as well as to the latest hour of his life, considered that it was both the duty and the interest of this country steadily to maintain it; and when in 1826, Sir Charles Stewart, as British plenipotentiary, conceded this principle at Rio de Janeiro, in an article in the treaty which he negotiated, Mr. Canning at once repudiated the concession in the following terms:—

This engagement is not only at variance with the prin-

ciples of our maritime policy, but was such as was calculated to place the British Government in serious difficulties.

The rule of maritime law which Great Britain has always held on the subject, is the ancient law and usage of nations; but it differs from that put forward by France, and by the Northern Powers of Europe, and that which the United States of North America are constantly endeavouring to establish.

England has braved confederacies and sustained wars rather than give up this principle; and whenever, in despair of getting the British Government to surrender it by force, recourse has been had to proposals of amicable negotiation for the purpose of defining, limiting, or qualifying the exercise of the right of search, Great Britain has uniformly declined all such overtures from a conviction of the impracticability of qualifying, limiting, or even defining it in terms that would be acceptable to the other party, without impairing, if not sacrificing the right itself.

That which England had thus steadily denied both to the suggestions of friendship, and to the menaces of hostility, on the part of half the Powers of the Old World and of the oldest established State in the New, was granted by this article gratuitously to the infant Empire of Brazil.

It must be said gratuitously, because the concurrence of Brazil in the principle of the rule maintained by Great Britain on this subject, was not at all worthy of being purchased at such a price.

Brazil might adopt, if she pleased, the ancient rule of maritime war, but England could not take that adoption as a concession to herself. She could not consent to acknowledge it as such, by incurring an obligation which, when published in the treaty, would probably revive questions which had been happily set at rest, and which were never stirred without danger, if not to the peace, at least to the good understanding of nations.

These were the views of Mr. Canning, and all the great statesmen who lived in his time; the strange

doctrine had not then been put forth that 'powerful 'countries are never vanquished by losses sustained by 'individuals, and that it is only by the conflicts of 'armies by land, and of fleets by sea, that the great 'contests of nations are decided.'*

It may, indeed, be true in one sense, that armies and fleets decide these contests; but then armies and fleets must be created before they can decide them. A nation without the means of equipping a fleet or an army, is without the means of conflict. It may, indeed, carry on a desultory guerilla warfare on its own invaded territories; but if it be too poor to raise armaments in its defence, it must submit to invasion before it can even come in collision with its foe. A nation is but an aggregation of individuals; the strength, therefore, of a nation (humanly speaking) consists in the strength and means of its individual members. Public property—fleets, armies, arsenals, &c.—is created out of the private property of individuals; impoverish individuals and destroy their means, and fleets and armies will soon disappear. Therefore, —if commerce be a source of wealth, and if wealth create the warlike instruments, aggressive or defensive, of nations,—annihilate commerce, and much indeed will be done towards annihilating the means of creating those instruments. Allow neutrals to carry on commerce with your enemy, and you provide him with the sinews of war. If it be that the intercourse of merchants must not on any account be interrupted — against whom can war be waged? Only against a metaphysical abstraction, called the State,—

* By Lord Palmerston.

as if the State were anything but the aggregate of the people.

It is asserted that the adherence to this doctrine produced the war with the United States, which broke out in the month of June of 1812; but a careful examination of the facts attendant on that rupture, will show that that assertion is erroneous.

The French, or war party, in the United States, certainly took advantage of the opportunity, afforded by the repudiation by the British Government of the concession made by its Minister, to inflame the passions of the American democracy against this country. But that the non-withdrawal of the Orders in Council was not one of the real causes of the war, is evident from what passed between the two Governments respecting them, in 1811, when Lord Wellesley was Foreign Secretary. The envoy of the United States at Paris obtained a pledge from the Government of France that the Berlin and Milan Decrees should be annulled on a certain fixed day, if the Government of Great Britain would, in consequence, withdraw the Orders in Council, and give up the principles respecting blockade, on which they had acted from the beginning of the war. Lord Wellesley told the American envoy in London, that the Orders in Council were the retaliation for the French Decrees, and that if the decrees were annulled, the orders should be withdrawn; but to require as well the abandonment of the rules of blockade was asking for more than an equivalent, as those rules were the ancient and undoubted usage of nations. The British Government would not, therefore, abandon them. Nevertheless the United States envoy at Paris made no effort to

induce the French Government to abandon this condition: although assured that, on its abandonment, the orders would have been withdrawn.

There were, in truth, other motives which induced the United States to engage in hostilities with England; and (although the 'orders' are mentioned in the President's justification of the war, which preceded its actual declaration by the Congress) they are not made the most prominent of the grounds of complaint. Moreover, when the Orders in Council were given up, it did not satisfy America; for America, with ulterior objects, was *not* to be satisfied.

The first and principal of those alleged grounds was the assertion and exercise of what was known as 'the right of impressment.' That is, the right of searching for, and, if found, of impressing the subjects of Great Britain who might have volunteered, or been kidnapped, or seduced, to serve as sailors in the navy or mercantile marine of the United States; that right was grounded by the British Government on the universal principle, that no man can relieve himself from that indelible allegiance which he owes to the Government under which he was born. 'We are,' said Mr. Canning, 'by ancient, 'unquestioned, and uninterrupted usage, and by the 'law of nations, as it is now understood, in the pos-'session of this right;' and his counsel was, that we should retain the possession until force compel us to resign it.

The opposite doctrine—viz. that a man may throw off his allegiance to his native country and transfer it to another, is fraught with the most monstrous consequences; there is no greater crime known to law

than that committed by the man who either betrays or fights against his own country; yet would not this be any crime at all, if a man, by transferring his allegiance to another State, whenever it suited his own pleasure or convenience, can divest himself of the obligations of fidelity which he owes to his own. These were the two conflicting doctrines respectively maintained by Great Britain and the United States, and it was in defence of so untenable a principle that, in the twentieth year of the war, the United States had recourse to the dire extremity of arms.

It is true that, in the reasons put forth by the President, great stress was laid upon the oppressive way in which Great Britain exercised the right; but while, on the one hand, it was clearly proved that the American authorities had recourse to a large supply of fraudulent 'certificates of origin,' which, as admitted by a committee of the House of Representatives of the State of Massachusetts, were indiscriminately sold to all seamen who chose to purchase them; on the other hand, Great Britain had, magnanimously and willingly, renounced the practice of visiting American ships of war, because it might be deemed injurious to the discipline, and derogatory to the honour of the national navy.

In point of fact, however, so far from the right of impressment having been exercised in an oppressive way, it appears by official returns that in the whole year preceding the war, only nineteen seamen were detained by British authorities, claiming to be American citizens, and of them only two were taken from ships at sea.

The motives alleged for the war, then, on the part

of the United States were evidently not the real ones. Those motives were (probably unintentionally) revealed by Mr. Russell, the *Chargé d'Affaires* of the United States, some months previously to the declaration of war; he then pointed out to the Ministers the *consequences* which they might expect from a war, and told them, 'If concessions were not speedily 'made, the passions of the inhabitants of the United 'States would be roused, and *conquests might be* '*gained on terms which forbad restoration.*' The conquest of Canada was evidently before this gentleman's eyes when he thus prematurely penned this remarkable sentence. There can indeed be now no doubt that the real motives which influenced the young republic to resort to war were the lust of conquest, and the ambition for territorial acquisition. Republics, indeed, are quite as often cursed by these ambitious and grasping desires as the most absolute of monarchies; but, in this case, the passion was so strong that not even the knowledge that, by attacking Great Britain, they were encouraging and aiding, as far as in them lay, the most ruthless tyranny that ever oppressed mankind, could restrain them from taking advantage of the opportunity, when all the energies of Britain were being exerted for the overthrow of that tyranny, to try and filch from her the fairest portion of her Transatlantic dominions.

For this selfish object, this 'enlightened republic,' (with its 'government recently regenerated on the 'principles of pure philanthropy and uncorrupted 'virtue,' where 'the representative system is con- 'sidered defective unless each individual can inter- 'fere directly in the national concerns, and where

'every man is a politician in the coffee-house as well 'as in the Senate'), threw down the gauntlet to Great Britain. This 'glorious republican community,' 'which, from its *professed* innate hatred to tyranny,' might have surely been expected to make the most persevering 'exertions for the liberation of mankind, 'nevertheless did not hesitate at this crisis of the 'world's history, to "enlist under the banner of the 'despot."'*

It was then, neither our 'Orders in Council,' nor our exercise of the right of impressment, or, as it was then called, the 'right of search,' which really influenced the United States in declaring war against Great Britain.

This 'right of search' in time of war must not, however, be confounded with what has since been called the 'right of search' in time of peace. Whilst the possession of the former right by every nation is undoubted, the latter so-called 'right' is one which really no nation can claim, unless specially conceded by treaty by the State to whose vessels it is applied. The most that can be claimed on this head—and it is a claim not to be set up by any one nation in particular, but belongs alike to the weakest and the strongest—is to ascertain that a vessel engaged in suspicious or unlawful acts on the high seas, is entitled to sail under the flag which she hoists. This has been miscalled the 'right of search,' whereas, in correct language, it is only the *right of identification.* So soon as it is ascertained that a vessel is legally authorized to hoist the flag of any particular

* *Vide* Mr. Canning's Speech at Liverpool, Jan. 10, 1814.

nation, to that nation, as responsible for the acts of the vessel, must application be made for indemnity for any injuries which may have been sustained in consequence of the misdeeds of the crew. The right of identification once exercised and satisfied, all right of search is extinguished. But if the right of identification be denied, every nation is deprived of all control over its own vessels: for all nationality may be cast off and annihilated if a false flag can be lawfully hoisted. Flags would henceforth be rendered useless on the ocean.

To return. The United States, the fancies of whose people were beguiled by visions of imaginary conquests, made an abortive attack on Canada, which ended in the most complete discomfiture. The war having continued for about two years, Great Britain was set free to direct the whole of her vast power against the United States; this, coupled with the discontent of the Northern States at the continuance of the war, manifested by their declared determination to dissolve the Union if it were persevered in, so pressed upon the Government at Washington that, after some lengthened discussions, a treaty of peace was made. This treaty related to the boundaries between the two States, the abolition of the Slave-trade, &c.; but it left wholly untouched the maritime grievances which had served as the pretext for the war!

CHAPTER XII.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE PENINSULAR WAR — SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY'S AND SIR JOHN MOORE'S EXPEDITION — MR. HOOKHAM FRERE—BATTLE OF TALAVERA.

IN accordance with the agreement at Tilsit between the two Emperors, Napoleon proceeded to carry out his designs for making himself the master of Spain and Portugal. With this intent, under the pretence of defending the Peninsula from an attack by the English, he marched large bodies of troops into Spain, and passing some of them through Spain, he contrived to occupy Portugal also. In these proceedings, the feeble and wretched Government at Madrid was content patiently to acquiesce; but that of Portugal, unable to resist, but yet resolved not to sanction by its presence the national degradation, preferred expatriation, and accordingly sought a shelter in Brazil. The result to the Spanish Monarch and his family of their blind approbation, or at least toleration of measures, one-tenth part of which ought to have opened their eyes to their true character, was the disgraceful abdication at Bayonne of the old King Charles IV., and of his son Ferdinand VII., 1808.

Then it was that an outbreak of enthusiastic indignation against the aggressor burst forth throughout the Peninsula; and then it was that Mr. Canning thought that something like a prospect

opened for the deliverance of Europe from Napoleon's tyranny.

The news of the universal resistance of the Spanish patriots produced great joy in England. Mr. Canning did his best to fan the flame, hesitating not at once to declare, that his Majesty's Ministers saw with the

Deepest and liveliest interest, the noble struggle which a part of the Spanish nation was making to resist the unexampled atrocity of France, and to preserve the independence of their country, and that they had the strongest disposition to afford every practical aid in a contest so magnanimous. . . . In endeavouring to afford this aid, it would never occur to them to consider that a state of war may exist between Spain and Great Britain. . . . We shall proceed [he said] upon the principle, that any nation of Europe that starts up with a determination to oppose a Power which, whether professing insidious peace, or declaring open war, is the common enemy of all nations, whatever may be the existing political relations of that nation with Great Britain, becomes instantly our essential ally. We shall have three objects in view; the first, to direct the efforts of the two countries against the common foe; the second, to direct those efforts as shall be most beneficial to the new ally; the third, to direct them in a manner conducive peculiarly to British interests. But of these objects the last will be out of the question, as compared with the other two.*

'It was with peculiar interest [says Sir Walter Scott, in his '*Life of Napoleon*†] that all lovers of their country listened 'to the manly declaration of Mr. Canning, in which, disclaim-'ing the false and petty policy which made an especial object 'of what were called peculiarly British interests, he pledged 'himself and the Administration to which he belonged, to 'pursue such measures as might insure Spanish success; be-'cause it was that which, considering the cause in which she

* House of Commons, June 15, 1808. † Chap. xlv

'was embarked, comprehended the essential interest, not of 'England only, but of the world.'

No time was lost by Mr. Canning and his colleagues in giving practical effect to the sentiments which he had thus expressed. Within five weeks from the day on which they were uttered, Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived at Corunna at the head of 10,000 troops, another force, under General Spenser, of 6000 men, was off Cadiz ready to form a junction with Sir Arthur, and an expedition on a still larger scale was preparing to quit the shores of England. The Spaniards, who had been so long at war with Great Britain, could hardly bring themselves, at first, to place entire confidence in their new allies; so when the offer of assistance was made at Corunna to the Gallician authorities by Sir Arthur, they replied, that they did not want men, but only money, arms, and ammunition. They, however, strongly urged a diversion in Portugal, to drive the French from Lisbon. To Portugal accordingly Sir Arthur proceeded, and soon effected a landing in Mondego Bay, where he was shortly after joined by General Spenser and his army, the united force amounting to 16,000 men. At the period when this landing was effected, the Portuguese had risen, and expelled the French from Oporto; but Lisbon and the south of Portugal were in possession of a French army, under General Junot.

Sir Arthur Wellesley now, for the first time, had the opportunity of measuring himself with the French generals. Accordingly, he attacked and defeated General Laborde at Roleia, and thus opened the road to Lisbon. He was then joined by further reinforcements under General Anstruther. When the French

general heard of this junction, and that Sir Arthur was also expecting the junction of a force under Sir John Moore, he left Lisbon with nearly the whole of his army, determined to bring on a battle before the triple union should be effected. The British general had no wish to avoid the contest; it was fought at Vimiera, and ended in the complete defeat of the French; but, Sir A. Wellesley being superseded in the command by the arrival of his senior officer, the victory was not followed up, as he urgently advised. Portugal, however, became no longer tenable by Junot, and a Convention was signed at Cintra, on the 30th August, for the evacuation of Portugal by the French army. Thus within six weeks of his landing in Portugal, Sir Arthur had twice defeated the French, the second time in a pitched battle, and freed Portugal from their presence.

If, when Sir Arthur, on the 15th of June, sailed from England, any one had ventured to predict that he would, before the end of August, have cleared Portugal of the French, the prediction would assuredly have been considered one far too sanguine to be believed. But the decisive victory at Vimiera so raised the just expectations of the British Government and nation, that they could not be content with anything short of the unconditional surrender, as prisoners of war, of the whole French army. In the Speech from the Throne, the British generals were blamed for 'acceding to the terms of the Convention;' blame which Sir Arthur shared with the others, because he had signed the Convention, although, in point of fact, he highly disapproved it; but being desired by his superior officer to sign it, he preferred

obedience, to the danger which he knew would arise to the army if he had refused to comply. Some authorities now approve of the Convention; but, whether wise or unwise, it is clear that if Sir H. Burrard and Sir Hew Dalrymple had not immediately after the battle assumed the command, Sir Arthur would have 'vigorously followed up the enemy; and had that 'been done,' as he said, 'there would have been no 'need of concluding the Convention which had given 'so much offence.' After this campaign, Sir Arthur returned to England.

While these transactions were going on in Portugal, 10,000 Spanish troops, whom Napoleon had sent for his own purposes to the North of Germany, were, with admirable skill, withdrawn from his jurisdiction, and placed on board the English fleet, and conveyed to Corunna, with all their stores, arms, and artillery.

When the resistance first broke out in Spain, there seems to have been little or no concert between the several provinces of the kingdom; but, with a remarkable unanimity, each and all adopted the same course, of establishing provincial juntas to direct, in the best way which offered, the efforts of the inhabitants against their oppressors. The disadvantage, to the Spaniards themselves, of there being no central authority, was considerable; but the inconvenience of there being none with which arrangements could be made, was, of course, much felt by the British Ministers. Mr. Canning, therefore, thought it right to make it a *sine quâ non* condition of the employment of a British army in Spain, that a Central or Supreme Junta should be established. After some delay this point was ac-

complished. Then Mr. Canning accredited to that Junta Mr. Hookham Frere.

The advance into Spain under Sir John Moore, who had an army under him in Portugal of about 12,000, did not take place till some weeks after the Convention at Cintra was signed. The delay was occasioned by the tardy departure from England of the reinforcements to join him. Had they arrived in Spain in the middle of August, they would have found the Spanish armies undefeated; but when the British army was in a condition to advance, Napoleon had, with his wonted celerity, defeated and dispersed the Spanish forces, and had opened for himself the road to Madrid. As usual, in such cases, it is difficult to decide on whom the blame of the delay ought to rest; but the delay annoyed Mr. Canning, whose temperament was one that ill brooked unnecessary tardiness when once he had set his mind upon an object.

Neither was he satisfied with the temper of mind in which Sir John Moore had set out to take the command of the expedition; for Lord Castlereagh had disclosed to the Cabinet the parting words addressed to him by Sir John. After the latter had had his final interview, had taken his leave, and actually closed the door, he re-opened it, and said to Lord Castlereagh, 'Remember, my lord, I protest against the expedition, and foretell its failure.' Having thus disburdened his mind, he instantly withdrew, left the office, and proceeded to Portsmouth to take the command of the expedition. When Lord Castlereagh mentioned this circumstance to the Cabinet, Mr. Canning could not help exclaiming,

'Good God! and do you really mean to say that 'you allowed a man entertaining such feelings with 'regard to the expedition, to go and assume the 'command of it?'* It was in consequence of what passed in Cabinet respecting this interview, that an official letter, which is described as equivalent to one demanding his resignation,† was sent after him; but Sir John did not take the hint, sent a dignified reply, and sailed with the expedition.

Although Sir John Moore was a man of very great ability, and a truly brave soldier, yet it is evident on reading the accounts of his campaign, that the sentiments which he thus avowed to Lord Castlereagh retained their influence over him. If Sir A. Wellesley's brief campaign in Portugal be compared with that of Sir John Moore in the North of Spain, it seems clear that the two generals were respectively imbued with spirits very opposite to each other. In the one, judgment, firmness, and confidence in himself; in the other a too frequent distrust of his own movements, and an inability to shake off the dread of failure. 'Sir John Moore,' said Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, 'will be unwilling to 'throw himself into the heart of Spain, unless he is 'ordered to do so.'‡

The difficulties which he had to encounter were certainly much greater than what the British Ministry had contemplated, for they expected that he would find large Spanish armies organized, and fit for ser-

* This anecdote Mr. Canning told me.

† Napier's *Peninsular War*, vol. i. p. 505.

‡ Oct. 19, 1808, p. 481, *Castlereagh Papers.*

vice; but, by the time he arrived, he only found the dispersed remnants of those which Napoleon in person or his generals had defeated, save one, which, however, experienced shortly after a total defeat at Tudela. It was on receiving news of that defeat that Sir John determined to commence his retreat. Before doing so he resolved on consulting Mr. Frere. The advice of the ambassador was not to abandon Spain. When he gave this advice, he had before his eyes the memorable defence of Saragossa. He believed that Madrid might, aided by the inhabitants, be defended against the foe; and remembering that the first defeat which Napoleon had ever experienced in person was at Acre, by the hands of a British admiral, he implored Sir John to advance boldly to Madrid. 'I have no hesitation,' he said, 'in taking upon my-'self any responsibility which may attach itself to 'this advice, as I consider the fate of Spain as de-'pending absolutely, for the present, upon the deci-'sion which you may adopt.' Thus urged, Sir John ordered that part of the army under Sir David Baird, and which had already 'commenced its retreat to 'Corunna, again to advance and occupy Astorga, and 'expressed his intention of hazarding an advance at 'whatever risk.' 'But he added,' says Southey, 'these "ominous words:"—"I mean to proceed bridle '"in hand; for if the bubble bursts, and Madrid falls, '"we shall have a run for it."' What might have been the final result, had Sir John determined to throw his army into Madrid, there to oppose Napoleon, must remain doubtful; but little good resulted from what he did determine on—viz., a diversion in the north

of Spain. For this purpose he formed a junction with Sir David: shortly after which he heard of the fall of Madrid.

A gallant action at Sahagun, in which the British cavalry defeated double the number of the French, put the army in the highest spirits, and made them look forward with impatience to a speedy conflict with Marshal Soult, who commanded in that quarter. Suddenly the news was spread that the marshal had received very considerable reinforcements, and that Napoleon was marching at the head of his guards to join him. The effect on the army of this intelligence was overwhelming.—'In my life,' says one who was present, 'I never 'witnessed such an instantaneously withering effect 'upon any body of living creatures! A few mur-'murs only were heard, but every countenance was 'changed, and they who the minute before were full 'of that confidence which insures victory, were at 'once deprived of all heart and hope.'* Could such a fearful change have come over the hearts of British soldiers who placed real confidence in their general? In a similar position, would similar news have had such a 'withering' effect on any army of which Wellington was at the head? Retreat was immediately determined on; it was disastrous in many respects, and, although it had always been in the contemplation of Sir John Moore, the preparations for it were nevertheless extremely inadequate. It was, however, redeemed under the walls of Corunna, when Sir John turned upon his pur-

* Southey, vol. ii. p. 493.

suers, and by a victory obtained under circumstances of great disadvantage, he made the enemy pay dearly for their pursuit. The brave man himself fell, and was buried on the ramparts.* His army hastily re-embarked, and returned in a deplorable condition to Great Britain.

Very opposite opinions prevailed at the time as to the parties on whom ought to rest the blame of the failure of this expedition. Perhaps the most prevalent opinion was, that Sir John Moore was an able and prudent commander, that he was called upon to accomplish impossibilities, that his retrograde march to Corunna was a master-piece of strategy, and that a victory gained, at the end of a retreat, in which such losses of men and material were experienced, is hardly equalled in history. Mr. Frere's conduct was censured as presumptuous, and such as would have certainly led to the complete destruction or surrender of the army, had it been adopted by the commander. How far these views are correct, others may undertake to determine; but they were not shared by Mr. Canning. He always thought that Mr. Frere's advice was wise, and that Sir John might have accomplished more than he did, had it not been for his misgivings as to the advisableness of the undertaking, which too strongly, from the outset, influenced his mind. In some respects Mr. Frere certainly formed an erroneous estimate of what the Spaniards would do; but, on the other hand, a more decided course on the part of the British general might have roused them to

* Jan. 16, 1809.

more vigorous efforts than they actually made. The descriptions given in various works (upon this period of the Spanish contest) of the presumption, the incapacity, the false boasting of those in authority in Spain, and the general indifference of the people, might go far to excuse, or to justify the conduct of Sir John Moore, and to condemn that of Mr. Frere. Nevertheless, the impartial inquirer into these events must see that there is an opposite side to the picture, and that if Mr. Frere was too confident, and trusted too much to the assurances which were given him, the British commander, on the other hand, was not justified in treating them as wholly unworthy of attention. For, after the British army had embarked at Corunna, on the 18th of January, 1809, we read of various efforts at resistance—and some successful ones — which were made by the Spanish patriots.

Facts, too, are recorded in the very pages of the historian,* who condemns, in the most unmeasured terms, the opinions entertained and the advice given by Mr. Frere, which facts, at any rate, prove that the opinions on which that advice depended were certainly not without good foundation. For instance, Mr. Frere affirmed that the people were enthusiastic in the cause: the historian observes—

Men were to be had in abundance; but beyond assembling them, and appointing some incapable person to command, nothing was done for defence. The officers had no confidence either in their own troops or in the Government; neither were they confided in nor respected by their men—the latter

* Napier's *Peninsular War.*

being starved, ill-used, and ill-handled in the field, possessed neither the compact strength of discipline nor the daring of enthusiasm. Under such a system the peasantry could not be rendered energetic soldiers, nor were they active supporters of the cause; yet, *with a wonderful constancy, they endured for it fatigue, sickness, nakedness, and famine, displaying in all these sentiments a distinct and powerful national character. This constancy,* although rendered nugatory by the vices and follies of the juntas and leading men, *hallowed the people's efforts;* and the flagitious violence of the invasion *justified their ferocity.**

It seems that 'men were to be had in abun-'dance,' ready to endure the greatest hardships, and 'displaying a distinct and powerful national charac-'ter:'—a statement which, at any rate, goes some way to prove the correctness of Mr. Frere's opinions. They are also confirmed by Lord William Bentinck (who was then at Madrid), in an official letter to Lord Castlereagh, dated Oct. 8, 1808:—

> They say that France can never keep Spain, and I cannot but agree in this opinion. Past events have disappointed all calculations: no officer believed in the defeat of Dupont, and in the event of the siege of Saragossa. Colonel Lopez, the commander of the artillery, in conversing with his men frequently during the siege, on the possibility of their not being able to defend themselves, the answer always was, 'We must then die.' This is the sentiment which pervades the whole nation—man, woman, and child. (p. 473, vol. vi.)

Again we find, in the pages of the same author, accounts of Spanish armies in existence, and what is more, fighting with the French, and *that* within two months of the battle of Corunna.

In January, 'The Duke of Infantado's army,'

* *Peninsular War,* vol. ii. p. 12.

says General Napier, 'was about 20,000 men, of whom 2000 were cavalry.' (p. 13, vol. ii.) Again, he says, General Cuesta had 'an army of 16,000 infantry, and 3000 cavalry.' (p. 13.) Saragossa, for the second time, made, in the early part of this year (1809), an heroic resistance. 'Infantado might,' says the historian, 'have formed an intrenched camp, and 'from thence have carried on a methodical war, with, '*at least*, 25,000 troops.' (p. 51.) Gerona makes even a more heroic defence than Saragossa; and General Reding, after a signal defeat, 'rallies from 12,000 to 15,000 men.' (p. 71.)

In the very same month, and in the very same province through which Sir John conducted his retreat, the historian admits that 'Gallicia, although 'apparently calm, was ripe for a general insur-'rection' (p. 163), and before the month of June, with some trifling aid from the British, the French forces, under Marshal Ney, had evacuated the province.

In March, 'the amount of the Spanish force im-'mediately on the Tagus was about 16,000 men, and 'Cuesta had also several detachments and irregular 'bands in the rear which may be calculated at 8000 'men.' (p. 207.)

At the battle of Medellin, where the Spaniards were again signally defeated, 'Cuesta's army amounted to about 25,000 foot and 4000 horse.' (p. 215.)

These records of facts prove that Mr. Frere had good grounds for the opinions which he expressed: which the historian vehemently characterizes as exhibitions of 'weakness, arrogance, levity, and ignorance.'

Mr. Canning witnessed the return of Sir John Moore's army to England with great regret, but his confidence in the ultimate success of the Spanish cause was not diminished. From the first moment of the outbreak, he was strongly impressed with the conviction that the Peninsula afforded the best, if not the only, field on which this country had a fair chance of making an effectual resistance to the almost unlimited power of Napoleon. It was his belief, that if once that mighty conqueror should so far master the whole of Europe as to be able to wield its united strength against this country, in the same way as, in a few years afterwards, he did wield the strength of his tributary nations against Russia, we might have to fight for our independence on our own soil. The principle, therefore, for which he contended, and on which he invariably acted, was, 'that any 'nation starting up to oppose a power which was the 'common enemy of all nations, became instantly the 'one essential ally to whom we ought to afford every 'practical aid.'

He never, therefore, gave way to despondency, nor would he allow of gloomy prophecies respecting public affairs, without doing his best to inspire hope and to give confidence. He combatted the discouraging view taken of the national prospects by Lord Grenville and his friends, as well as by the Whig party. When the fate of Sir John Moore's expedition was known, we find him thus sustaining the courage of his countrymen:—

Even if the ship in which we are embarked is sinking, it is our duty to struggle against the boisterous elements; but I can never acknowledge that such is

our state; we are riding, proudly and nobly, buoyant on the waves.'*

The campaign in Portugal had satisfied Mr. Canning that England had (as he felt from the beginning) a general in whom she might confide. Notwithstanding opposition, and that the appointment did not rest with him, he secured the reappointment of Sir Arthur Wellesley to the command of the British army in Portugal. Sir Arthur arrived there in the middle of April, when he resumed the unfettered command (on the sea-coast) of that army which he was destined within four years to lead in triumph into France through the passes of the Pyrenees. He reached Lisbon on the 22nd of April. By that time a great change had taken place in the French tactics: a war with Austria had recalled Napoleon and a portion of his army from Spain, and the legions which he left there were directed rather to preserve the conquests which he had made, than to seek to make fresh acquisitions. Still, those legions were under skilful commanders, and amounted, according to Sir A. Wellesley's calculation, to about 122,000 men, well provided with artillery and cavalry, without including the troops in Pampeluna, Barcelona, and other garrisons. The forces under Spanish generals might be counted at some 30,000, and the British force in Portugal at from 20,000 to 25,000.

With this army, Sir Arthur, with the Portuguese forces under General Beresford, at once advanced

* January 31, 1809.

against Marshal Soult, who was in possession of Oporto; and having driven him out of the north of Portugal, returned with his army to the south, when, after some delay, he proceeded to join the Spanish General Cuesta in Spain, and obtained the victory of Talavera. He triumphed notwithstanding that the Spanish soldiers threw down their arms, and fled from the field. After this battle, Sir Arthur retired into Portugal. In the *Annual Register* for this year (1809), this advance into Spain and retreat to Portugal is thus described: 'In short, 'the march of Lord Wellington into the very throat 'of danger was most improvident, his escape most 'fortunate!' So apt are we to ascribe to good fortune what, in this instance, assuredly ought to be ascribed (humanly speaking) to courage, wisdom, foresight, and firmness.

This summer Mr. Canning prevailed upon Lord Wellesley to go as ambassador to Spain, thinking that the transcendent abilities of that eminent man, and the high reputation which he enjoyed, might serve to infuse courage and wisdom into the councils of the Spanish Junta. The proceedings of Lord Wellesley amply justified the selection. He was treated by the Spaniards with profound respect—and the Junta listened with forbearance to his suggestions to appoint a Regency and to convoke the Cortes, by whom their own power would be superseded: before the year closed they adopted these recommendations. Much gain to the common cause arose from the cordial co-operation between the two brothers; and when Lord Wellesley returned.

to England, he had possessed himself with a knowledge of the situation of affairs in the Peninsula, which proved of great benefit to the cause.

Before the close of the year, the policy of Napoleon in Spain was again changed. In the course of the summer he had once more prostrated the Austrian Empire, and dictated a triumphant peace. His forces were immediately after poured into the Peninsula, when he resumed the offensive, with the declared intention of reducing Cadiz, and planting his eagles on the heights of Lisbon.

CHAPTER XIII.

WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND AUSTRIA—EXPEDITION TO THE SCHELDT—RESIGNATION OF MR CANNING.

IT was in the spring of 1809, when all Napoleon's energies were devoted to the Peninsula, that Austria ventured on making a vigorous effort to recover her former power and dominions, and, for the fourth time, took up arms against the French conqueror.

In making this effort, Austria was not influenced by any suggestions of the British Cabinet; the motives which dictated it seem to have been intolerable uneasiness at continued degradation, and a belief that the moment was favourable for resistance. It was creditable to the courage of the Austrian Emperor, that the bitter experiences of Campo Formio, of Marengo, and of Austerlitz, did not daunt him in his determination once again to meet his enemy on the field of battle.

Napoleon, however, was (as he had hitherto been) equal to this as well as every other difficulty; and, as has been stated, having contracted his operations in Spain, and concentrated his forces to secure what he had already gained there, he appeared, within a month after he left Spain, at the head of the French armies on the Danube.

As soon as the intentions of Austria became known to the British Cabinet, the question arose, how this country could best afford aid in the contest. The well-known expedition to the Scheldt, to effect a diversion in her favour, was the mode proposed and adopted.

Had Mr. Canning been the sole arbiter, it would not have been sent. He thought that our exertions in the common cause had the best chance of producing good fruit by being concentrated in the Peninsula. But, at the same time, there were so many good reasons in favour of the attempt in the Scheldt, that he did not consider himself justified in withholding his sanction from the measure, or in refusing to share the responsibility which would attach to it. There can be no doubt that, had all been accomplished that was aimed at, a very great service would have been rendered; the enemy would have been seriously injured, and a powerful diversion made in favour of Austria, and our own security would also have been increased; for it has always been the opinion of the highest military and naval authorities, that an invasion of this country would have the best chance of success, if launched against us from the banks of the Scheldt and from the port of Antwerp. The actual work which the expedition had to perform, was to come by surprise upon Antwerp, and to seize or destroy all the shipping in the harbour, in which a large French and Dutch fleet was collected; such a deed, had it been accomplished, would have been well worth the effort that was made. The expedition, however, turned out unsuccessful; the elements op-

posed great obstacles, and the commanders were not men of that stamp to contend with and conquer difficulties.

After the fate of this expedition had been ascertained, the duel took place between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning. Full particulars of this unhappy event are recorded in various publications. But, whatever the particulars, duelling is an act which no sincere Christian can justify; the only palliation which can be offered in this case is, that in those days it was looked upon by society, not as a choice, but a necessity. To decline a challenge was a proof of cowardice, and cowardice is infamy.

With regard to the circumstances which led to the duel, Mr. Canning's conduct was blameless. The event took place in September, 1809. In the preceding April, he had made up his mind that a change in the war department (over which Lord Castlereagh presided) was essential. They had differed as to the mode of dealing with the terms of the convention of Cintra. They had respectively appealed to the King and to their colleagues, by circulating memorandums in opposition to each other's views, more especially with reference to that article of the convention which related to the rights of the French army to the plunder which they had taken from the Portuguese. Mr. Canning's view was that, as the King himself had no right to sanction the plunder of his allies, therefore the King's general (who could have no right but what was delegated to him by his Sovereign) exceeded his powers when he engaged to protect the French army in carrying

off Portuguese plunder; therefore, argued Mr. Canning, this article must be repudiated by the Government.

On the other hand, Lord Castlereagh (although fully agreeing with Mr. Canning in reprobating the terms of the convention, and this article in particular) maintained that, whether the general had or had not exceeded his power, the British Government was bound to give effect to the stipulation, even though, by so doing, it sanctioned the plundering of the Portuguese. Lord Castlereagh's opinion prevailed.

Again, the confusion in the command of the army at Vimiera, when Sir Arthur Wellesley was superseded by Sir Henry Burrard, and Sir Henry by Sir Hew Dalrymple, within the short space of twenty-four hours, and the mismanagement which ensued, and the advantages which were thrown away in consequence, created strong feelings of dissatisfaction in Mr. Canning's mind; this, together with the failure of the expedition under Sir John Moore, and the increasing inconvenience arising from a part of the business of the war department being connected with political correspondence, led Mr. Canning to state to the Prime Minister his conviction, that 'a 'change either in his own department or in Lord 'Castlereagh's appeared to him expedient for the 'public service,' expressing, at the same time, his perfect willingness that the alternative should be decided for his own retirement.

The duke urged Mr. Canning 'to suspend the execution of his intention to resign;' and then there took place a series of negotiations, such as ordinarily occur

when similar changes are contemplated in an Administration. With reference to these occurrences two charges were made against Mr. Canning. (1.) That he acquiesced in the concealment from Lord Castlereagh of the change which he proposed in the Government. (2.) That he allowed him to remain the Minister to prepare the expedition to the Scheldt after the change had been decided on.

To these two charges the answers are brief. As to the first—Mr. Canning repeatedly pressed in the most urgent way that no concealment should be practised towards Lord Castlereagh; more than once he tendered his own resignation to enforce disclosure: further, the concealment was carried on, at the suggestion and entreaties of both the Duke of Portland and Lord Castlereagh's own particular friends in the Cabinet, and of his connexion, Lord Camden, and also with the King's sanction. 'So far 'from desiring it, he conceived, however erroneously, 'Lord Camden to be the sure channel of communi-'cation to Lord Castlereagh; *and that up to a very 'late period he believed such communication to have 'been actually made.*'

This is a remarkable assertion. The truth is, the Duke of Portland, doubtless under a misapprehension, *assured Mr. Canning that the communication had actually been made to Lord Castlereagh*, and it was in reliance on the correctness of this assurance that Mr. Canning was contented to go on. Mr. Canning's regard and respect for the Duke of Portland restrained him from saying one word, which could disparage his Grace's character. In his letter to Lord Camden, he says:

No man who knows the affectionate respect and attachment which the manly and generous qualities of the Duke of Portland's mind were calculated to command, and which I invariably bore to him, will suspect me of being willing to establish my own vindication at the expense of the slightest disrespect to his memory, or prejudice to his fame.*

In explanation, however, of his conduct on this occasion, he told me how unhappily he had been misled by the duke.

With regard to the second charge—that he allowed Lord Castlereagh to prepare the expedition to the Scheldt after it had been determined that a change should be made; it is completely answered by the fact, that the change proposed, and with which Mr. Canning declared that he should be contented, was a 'new distribution of the business of the war department,' the effect of which 'new distribution would not have 'been to take out of Lord Castlereagh's hands the 'superintendence of the expedition to the Scheldt.' The facts recorded respecting the duel prove that, if blame attaches to the reserve practised towards Lord Castlereagh, that blame must attach to his own friends, who urged that reserve, and not to Mr. Canning, who, from the outset, strongly remonstrated against it. That Lord Castlereagh was very hasty in sending the challenge, is clear from the fact that the statements on which he supported it could not be maintained. That Mr. Canning was too hasty in accepting it, must also be conceded. He would have done wiser if, instead of instant acceptance, he had coolly informed his challenger that he would be ready to meet him if he repeated the demand, after he had

* When this was written the duke was dead.

shown him that it was founded on error. But easy as it may be, at this distance of time, to point out what might, or what ought to, have been done by both parties in accordance with the more Christian views of this age on this subject; yet, if we could place ourselves exactly in the same position, in which the principals were placed, we should feel that great allowances ought to be made for Lord Castlereagh's irritation, when the whole transaction was disclosed to him, as well as for that sensitiveness which made Mr. Canning's mind rebel against offering explanations, when he was assailed with what he knew to be unfounded accusations.

Animosity, however, did not long continue to exist between them; friendly relations were soon restored. Mr. Canning always valued Lord Castlereagh's good qualities, and readily acknowledged his abilities; but, in so doing, there was nothing incompatible with a desire for 'a new distribution of the business of the war department.'

Personal ambition is asserted to have been the base motive which alone actuated Mr. Canning; nevertheless his personal advancement would not have been promoted by the particular course which he pursued. His proposition to the Duke of Portland was, not that Lord Castlereagh should retire, but that there should be a change in the mode of conducting public business. If Lord Castlereagh was in the way of his ambition, this proposal would not have removed him out of it. Lord Wellesley was a far more formidable rival, yet did Mr. Canning labour for his introduction into the Ministry, because he wished the country to have the benefit of his great abilities.

The object uppermost in his mind at that alarming crisis, was the efficiency of the public service; he saw nothing but the difficulties and the dangers of his country: and the responsibility which they imposed upon him, as a Minister of State, was more than his anxious temperament could bear, if thwarted in what he considered to be the right policy. For that object he preferred Wellesley, though a rival, to Castlereagh, who, at that time, was not a rival.

There is a letter on record to Mr. Perceval* from Mr. Canning, which shows that the latter had it in contemplation (when the state of the Duke of Portland's health made it manifest that his Grace could not long retain the Premiership) to be his Grace's successor. It is evident, by the purport of that letter, that Mr. Canning did not consider Lord Castlereagh as either a competitor for, or an obstacle to, his own attainment of this high post. He did so consider Mr. Perceval, he openly avows it to him, and with an openness which clearly proves how incapable he was of underhand and tortuous ways, discusses honestly with his competitor their respective claims. 'Personal ambition' would have led him, therefore, to remonstrate with the Duke against the lead in the House of Commons being retained by Mr. Perceval, who in this respect was above him, and not to altering Lord Castlereagh's position, who, in the Administration, was only his equal. That Mr. Canning was ambitious to serve his country in the hour of her extreme peril, and that he was ready to encounter all the

* Phipps's *Memoir of Mr. Plumer Ward*, vol. i. p. 229.

responsibility, which such ambition entailed, needs not to be denied; but he sought power, not for the sake of the personal importance and influence which power confers on its possessor, but, entertaining earnest and decided views of what was needful for the public good, he desired power in order that he might carry them out. This is the lesson which these pages ought to inculcate on present and future statesmen. They set forth an example of a public man, the object of whose life was his country's weal, to which he was always ready to sacrifice his own.

The power of the First Minister is supreme in his Cabinet; if he ceases to be First Minister, the Ministry is, *ipso facto*, dissolved; individual Ministers may retain their offices, and may form part of a fresh combination with another head: but it is a new Ministry, and the colleagues of the new Premier must make a fresh agreement with him If a Cabinet Minister desire any recasting of the parts, he must go to the First Minister to make known his desire; if he wish to resign, in the first instance he must communicate his wish to the Premier, to be laid before his Sovereign. It is the First Minister, who, of his own choice, can make changes in the Administration—subject, of course, to the pleasure of the Sovereign. It is not that the Premier is *Primus inter pares*, but that he is *Primus*, and the next is the next, *longo intervallo*. The substantive power which he possesses in his Cabinet is very great.

If this power be wielded by a man of inferior ability, and without very decided opinions, it is not very formidable to his colleagues. But let a man of powerful intellect hold it, or one with very decided

opinions, and the authority, which he exercises, is the authority of a master. There is no alternative but submission, or resignation.

Now Mr. Canning had, if ever a man had, strong impressions of what is right; he appreciated the truth keenly, he could not tolerate its contravention. The Duke of Portland, though endowed with many noble qualities, was not a man of powerful intellect, and Mr. Canning had great influence over him, and was therefore well contented with him as his chief. But a totally different state of things would have arisen had the Duke's power passed into other hands. Like Sir Arthur Wellesley, who (after the battle of Vimiera, when prevented from following up his successes, and compelled by the obligation of military obedience, to sign a convention which he strongly condemned) desired to be recalled, because he could not brook with patience to be a witness of, and an unwilling participator in, the follies of his superior; so Mr. Canning would not run the risk of his measures being thwarted in their execution just sufficiently to mar their success. The substantive power of First Minister he coveted for the sake, not of himself, but of his measures.

It was not, however, his destiny then to attain his object. It was on his writing to the Duke of Portland to claim the fulfilment of the arrangement respecting Lord Castlereagh, that to his infinite annoyance and surprise he was then 'informed by the 'Duke, that no steps whatever had been taken by 'Lord Castlereagh's friends to reconcile him to the 'change, or to press on him for it, and that the Duke 'himself intended to retire.' On receiving this intel-

ligence, he at once definitively resigned (September 7), and only held office until his successor was appointed. Lord Castlereagh followed his example; and on the 19th sent the challenge which produced the duel.

Such was the unfortunate termination, from no fault of Mr. Canning's, of his tenure of the seals of the Foreign Office. Fifteen long and eventful years elapsed before they were again confided to his custody.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. PERCEVAL'S ADMINISTRATION—MR. CANNING'S EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE WAR IN SPAIN—FALL OF NAPOLEON—KING'S ILLNESS—THE REGENCY.

THE Duke of Portland was succeeded* as First Minister by Mr. Perceval, a scholar and a Christian; a man endowed with abilities, which entitled him to the respect and confidence of his country. Lord Wellesley succeeded Mr. Canning in the Foreign Office. For a short time there was a slight coolness between them, but no long time elapsed before their former intimacy was renewed. They both agreed in thinking that Spain was the ground on which alone Great Britain had a chance of successfully contending against Napoleon. Both had unbounded reliance in the military talents of Lord Wellington.

Mr. Canning, although no longer in a position to direct, lost no opportunity of encouraging perseverance in the Spanish contest, and of urging the House of Commons not to stint the supplies, which were necessary for that aid. On the 15th of June, 1810, the Government asked for a vote of credit for three millions. Mr. Whitbread in dissenting from so large a vote, took a very gloomy view of the state of our affairs; for at this period the career of Lord Wellington in the Peninsula had not been marked by any

* October, 1809.

decisive triumphs; he was then, however, preparing the means for obtaining them. Mr. Canning took the lead in support of the Government, and pressed the House not to relax its efforts.

In other instances [he observed] when once the French armies had overcome the regular and disciplined armies of the Continent, the conquered Power fell without further effort, and submitted to the will of the conqueror. But, I ask, is that the case in Spain? Has the enemy, with all his military superiority, and with all the advantage of having taken the Spaniards unprepared—of having occupied in peace the strongholds of war—has he yet succeeded in establishing his will as the law of Spain? . . . We have seen the Spanish armies beaten down, their towns taken and razed, yet have not those calamities broken their spirits. From the ashes of their slaughtered countrymen, and from the smoking ruins of their cities and their hamlets, has burst forth a renovated flame, kindling anew that ardour and enthusiasm which misfortune may, for a time, smother and overwhelm, but has not power to extinguish. A people so animated and so resolute may be exterminated, but they cannot be subdued; from each disaster that befals them they derive new energies as they do fresh motives for resistance. Immediate and decisive success was not to be expected in such a contest; but surely to have so long protracted the struggle against such an enemy, and under all the disadvantages under which they were forced into it, affords indisputable proof of qualifications in the Spaniards which demand our admiration and esteem; of a patriotism, a zeal, and a perseverance of which no people in Europe has hitherto afforded an example.

It is not [he said] now a question whether Spain and Portugal shall be suffered to return to a state of neutrality, upon our consenting on one part, and France on the other, to retire from the Peninsula, as from a field of battle; . . . the only question is, whether by abandoning the footing which we possess there, we shall leave France at liberty to

occupy the ground which we abandon, to occupy the ports and arsenals, to seize the naval resources of Spain and Portugal, and to fit out in harbours now in our possession, or under our protection, hostile fleets, destined (though destined, I trust, in vain) for the object most dear to the heart, and always uppermost in the thoughts of Buonaparte—the invasion and destruction of Great Britain.

We are engaged in the struggle, therefore, inevitably; and we have no alternative but to maintain it with vigour, or, declining it, to pay, in our own perils and in exertions for self-defence, the price of our own pusillanimity and baseness. Is this the situation of things in which the honourable gentleman* would recommend to us to pause on our policy, to cease our efforts on behalf of our allies, and to acquiesce in the injustice and usurpations of the enemy?†

Then, after having shown that there was no cause for despondency, but strong grounds for hope, he thus justifies our originally embarking in the contest in the true spirit by which all such dreadful matters ought to be decided.

In a crisis of such extraordinary novelty—such transcendant importance, when interests so mighty were committed to the issue of the struggle, and when that issue, after all that could be done, was necessarily so hazardous and uncertain, it was impossible to take any step, or to offer any counsel which must not, at the time, be felt and acknowledged to be of doubtful and questionable policy; and to which it was not foreseen, that, in the event of a disastrous result, that disaster would be, however unjustly, ascribed! But in this difficulty of choice were we to do nothing, were we to counsel nothing, till the use of counsel and the period of action were passed? Or, were we, *at some risk,* but *with a determined purpose, conscious of a just end,* though *necessarily less confident of our means,* to take the course *which appeared, upon the whole, liable to the fewest objections?*

* Mr. Whitbread. † Canning's *Speeches,* vol. iii. p. 11.

To the opinion that Talavera was a barren victory, he replied:

Barren undoubtedly it was, if victory has no fruits but districts overrun, fortresses taken, extent of territory acquired; yet not barren, but fruitful—not unproductive, but as advantageous as brilliant, if we take into account that it immediately opened to us the gates of Cadiz, and that it will hereafter open to us the ports of Spanish America—advantages which far outweigh the ordinary military results of a victory. But even were the effects of all our exertions confined to prolonging the struggle against France in European Spain, so thoroughly am I convinced of the policy of supporting that struggle to the last extremity, that were the question, at this moment, a new and undecided question,—were our armies and our fleets hitherto not engaged, nor our faith pledged to the cause, I should be of opinion that it would be our duty, no less than our interest, even *now*, to begin our efforts in aid of the Peninsula, if now, for the first time, we were called upon to begin them.

Nearly the whole of Spain was at this time in possession of the French:

But [said Mr. Canning] Cadiz is now occupied by British conjointly with Spanish troops; the pledge of that alliance by which Spain may yet be rescued and saved. Whilst Cadiz is safe, Spain is not lost; and while all is not lost, all is ultimately retrievable.

War is unavoidably attended with calamities as well as with glories. Its glories are sullied and darkened by its calamities; its calamities redeemed—or in part redeemed—by its glories. But if we accustom ourselves to look only at one side of the picture in the case of an enemy, and at the other in our own; at all that is gloomy on one part, and all that is brilliant on the other; if we count for the enemy all that he gains and all that we lose, but for ourselves only our positive gains, without admitting into the account the losses of the enemy; against such a mode of calculating

results, no spirit can long stand unimpaired; we go to the field already half subdued; we may entitle ourselves to commendation for the fineness of our sympathies, but we are utterly unfitted for continuing the contest.

Within six months after the delivery of the speech which contained these passages, Lord Wellington, on the heights of Torres Vedras, was defying a French army of about 90,000 strong under Marshal Masséna, one of the ablest of Napoleon's marshals, who expected to 'drive Wellington into the sea,' as Soult boasted that he had driven the army of Sir John Moore. Masséna, in the midst of the triumph of pursuit, suddenly, and most unexpectedly, found himself in the presence of impregnable fortifications, garrisoned by the British and Portuguese; whilst on all other points he was surrounded by a hostile population; the country was ravaged in his rear; and his supplies were exhausted, without the means of recruiting them.

Thus was he completely entangled by the genius of Wellington. After remaining near Lisbon through the winter, in a state of extreme distress, with his army in want of almost every necessary, he was forced to retreat in order to save it from annihilation, and Portugal, for the second time, was freed by the British general from the presence of the enemy. This time no superior officer interfered to rob Lord Wellington of the fruit of his almost bloodless victory.

In one of those memorandum papers of *speech headings* before mentioned,* there are the following notes relating to this period.

* Chap. iii.

1. The evacuation of Portugal, not an event of gratulation only, but of hope and counsel for the future.

2. Not an insulated success or Godsend, but, so far as Lord Wellington is concerned, the legitimate and foreseen result of wise and adequate measures; so far as the Government, a decision of the question of warfare, which has for some years divided the opinions of the country.

3. I cannot be contented to speak of it as a providential escape from rarely incurred peril, or unexpected deliverance from unnecessary hazard, because that might imply a discontinuance, and a retreat, when I look for renewed effort and perseverance.

Barrossa, Maidà, Talavera *might* be brilliant spots in a worthless system; but, if what has happened be brilliant, it is as the result of system—as part of a plan.

I cannot be contented that the plan should be considered as bad from the beginning, but this a lucky end of Lord Wellington's foolish expectations.

I look to it as the system, whether to keep off invasion, or to repel it.

4. We are at war because we cannot be at peace; the comparison, therefore, not between war and peace—between exertion and repose, but between one mode of warfare and exertion, and another.

5. The other system, *that* of husbanding our resources *till* some great occasion, *or* for home defence. First, *what* great occasion—could the imagination of man conceive greater—uniting more temptations than the Peninsula? yet *that* we know would not have been temptation enough. How many occasions would slip by unseized?

* * * *

14. England not a military country! Why not? because a naval one. The trident and the sword.

15. Not a military country, with such an army and such a general! For this national object the merit of the general not to be forgotten. He is peculiarly entitled to personal consideration, because he has been peculiarly the object of personal attack.

16. When one looks back at the whole of his conduct for the last two years, and considers what must have been the anxiety with which, by slow degrees, he has prepared his army, and the nation for whose defence it was intended, for the result which has at length taken place, and fancied him reading all the abuse and ridicule, &c., and looking calmly and confidently forward to this refutation of them, surely, surely, there is ground for admiration.

From this period commenced the continued series of successes which, with no material check, ended in justifying Mr. Canning's confident assertion that as 'all was not lost, all was ultimately retrievable.' When Wellington drove the French armies before him through the gorges of the Pyrenees, '*all was* ultimately *retrieved*.'

It was of this period of his life, when witnessing these triumphs, that, in the fulness of his heart, many years after, he observed, 'two years of office then was well worth ten years of life!'

Lord Wellington's successes were, of course, facilitated by the relaxation of the French efforts in the Peninsula, in consequence of Napoleon's drawing off from Spain all the forces which he dared, for his invasion of Russia with that gigantic army which he led over her borders only to perish in her snows. So soon as it became evident that Russia was prepared to war with Napoleon, the British Ministry, true to the principle that* 'any nation of Europe which 'starts up with a determination to oppose a Power 'which is the common enemy of all nations, whatever 'may be the existing political relations of that nation 'with Great Britain, becomes instantly our essential

* Chap. xii. p. 155.

'ally,' immediately restored amicable relations with the Russian Emperor, by whom British successes in the Peninsula had been felt as the strongest encouragement to resist, and the greatest help in resisting the ambitious aggressions of Buonaparte.

It was on the occasion of a vote of thanks to Lord Wellington for the battle of Vittoria, that this beautiful passage occurs in Mr. Canning's speech:—

Spain had been the theatre of Lord Wellington's glory, but it would not be the boundary of the beneficial result of his triumph. The same blow which had broken the talisman of the French power in Spain had disenchanted the North. How was their prospect changed! In those countries where at most a short struggle had been terminated by a result disastrous to their wishes, if not altogether closing in despair, they had now to contemplate a very different aspect of affairs. Germany crouched no longer, trembling at the feet of the tyrant, but maintained a balanced contest. The mighty deluge by which the Continent had been overwhelmed began to subside; the limits of nations were again visible, and the spires and turrets of ancient establishments began to reappear above the subsiding wave. It was this victory which had defined these objects so lately involved in overwhelming confusion. To whom, under God, were they indebted for this? To the man to whom they were this day* voting their thanks.

Four months after (November 17, 1813), on occasion of voting a sum of money to enable his Majesty to fulfil his engagements with Foreign Powers, the following remarks were made:—

It is a fact, acknowledged by all, that our enemy, who has enslaved the press, and made it contribute so importantly to his own purposes of ambition at various periods

* July 7, 1813.

during the hostilities, has endeavoured to impress on all those who are likely to be our allies a notion that Great Britain only fought to secure her own interests, that her views were completely selfish. That illusion is now destroyed, and the designs of this country have been vindicated by recent events. We call on all the Powers with whom we are at war, to do us justice in this respect, but, above all, we claim it of America, with which, as much as any man, I wish for reconciliation. If she were now hesitating and wavering which of the two great contending parties she would join, would not the conduct of England now decide the doubt? I ask her to review her own and the policy of this country, and to acknowledge that we are deserving, not only of her confidence, but of the support of mankind. Now she can behold Buonaparte in his native deformity, stript of the false glory, which success had cast around him. The spell of his invincibility is now dissolved. She can now look on him without that awe, which an uninterrupted series of victories had created. Were she now to survey him as he is, what would be the result? She would trace him by the desolation of empires, and the dismemberment of states. She would see him pursuing his course over the ruins of men and of things—slavery to the people, and destruction to commerce — hostility to literature, to light, and life, were the principles on which he acted; his object was to extinguish patriotism, and to confound allegiance—to darken as well as to enslave—to roll back the tide of civilization—to barbarize as well as to desolate mankind. Then let America turn from this disgusting picture—these scenes of bloodshed and horror, and compare with them the effect of British interference. She will see that, whenever this country has exerted herself, it has been to raise the fallen, to support the falling—to raise, not to degrade, the national character—to enlighten, to reanimate, to liberate. Great Britain has resuscitated Spain, and re-created Portugal. Germany is now a nation as well as a name. And all these glorious effects have been produced by the efforts, and by the example, of our country. If to be the deliverers of Europe; if to have raised our

own national character, and not upon the ruins of other kingdoms; if to meet dangers without shrinking, and to possess courage rising with difficulties, be admirable, surely we may not unreasonably hope for the applause and approbation of the world.*

Within nine months after this speech was delivered, Napoleon Buonaparte set out for Elba, and Louis XVIII. was restored to the throne of his ancestors. Then was accomplished all that Mr. Canning hoped for in 1799, as expressed in his letter, when Buonaparte first seized the Government:—

I do expect the establishment of despotism in France—most anxiously do I expect, and most fervently do I pray for it; and through this establishment I do look for the ultimate restoration of the monarchy (at how near a period I leave to —— to determine) in some one individual of the exiled family.†

This was the last speech made by Mr. Canning before the final fall of Napoleon. At the period of the return from Elba and the battle of Waterloo, Mr. Canning was at Lisbon. He, therefore, took no part in deciding Napoleon's destiny—the decision, however, he entirely approved. In 1808, when Buonaparte was at the height of his power, Mr. Wilberforce said of him 'He is manifestly an instrument in the 'hands of Providence; when God has done with him, 'He will probably show how easily He can get rid 'of him.' The rapidity with which the mighty fabric fell, which it had taken so many years to raise, remarkably fulfilled these words.

---

* *Speeches*, vol. iii. p. 435. † Chap. v. p. 46.

It has been said, by Sir Walter Scott, that—

In the many hours of meditation which were afforded to Buonaparte by his residence in St. Helena, we can never perceive any traces of the reflection that he owed his unhappy situation, less to the immediate influence of those, who were agents in his defeat and imprisonment, than to that course of ambition, which, sparing neither the liberties of France, nor the independence of Europe, had rendered his personal freedom inconsistent with the rights of the world in general. He felt the distresses of his situation, but he did not, or could not, reason on their origin.*

However true these remarks may be with reference to what is known of Napoleon's life at St. Helena, it, nevertheless, is certain (as the following anecdote proves) that there were moments in his life when he looked upon himself as the author of his own misfortunes, and when even he did not refrain from making the avowal to others.

It was on the voyage to St. Helena, when the island was just looming in the distance, after dinner, that the conversation turned on a camp library. Napoleon remarked that he had one with him; and, turning round to one of his attendants, desired that it might be brought to him. After it had been brought and looked at, the Emperor took out a book, and, whether by accident or design, opened it at the story of *La Fée Gracieuse*, which he read aloud to the company. He read of the miseries and misfortunes of a poor farmer; of the appearance to him of a good Fairy, and her promise to grant him every wish, provided he wished for nothing unreasonable; but telling him that, on his expressing an unreasonable wish, she

* *Life of Napoleon*, chap. ix. p. 4.

should bring back upon him all the miseries from which he was then suffering. The first wishes that the farmer expressed, were for good health for himself and family, abundant crops, and healthy cattle—all granted; next he wished for a larger farm and a better house, then for a small park with a very handsome residence—all granted; then for a very large park, with a magnificent castle—granted; but in one corner of this very large park the field of a poor neighbour intruded. Would he sell it? No, he would not sell his patrimony. For many weeks the farmer debated with himself, should he express a wish that the Fairy should confer it on him? At last, his evil genius prevailed, and he gave utterance to the wish. Immediately the Fairy appeared to him; 'You have 'expressed,' she said, 'a most unreasonable wish; you 'should have remembered my condition. I now re-'duce you to the state of poverty and distress in 'which I found you.' At these words Napoleon closed the book, saying, '*Me voila, et me voici à St. Helêne.*'*

The good old King, 'whose active virtues, and the 'memory of whose virtues when it pleased Divine 'Providence that they should be active no more, had 'been the guide and guardian of his people through 'many a weary and many a stormy pilgrimage,' lived, indeed, when the arch-enemy of his kingdom became a prisoner on board one of his ships of war; but

* This anecdote was told me in 1833 by Commissioner (afterwards Admiral Sir John) Ross, who was present at the time, being the flag captain to Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who conveyed Napoleon to St. Helena in the *Northumberland*.—AUTHOR.

lived, alas! unconscious that the day was won, and that the dangers which his manly heart, trusting in God, had resolutely braved, were no longer menacing his people.

It was at the end of the year 1810 that the obscuration of the mental faculties of George III. became so marked that it was necessary to provide 'the 'means for supplying the defect in the personal 'exercise of the royal authority;' on which occasion Mr. Perceval proposed to appoint the Prince of Wales Regent by Act of Parliament, and to impose for a year certain restrictions on the exercise of the prerogative. The Opposition were opposed to the mode of appointment, contending that it ought to be effected by an address to the Heir Apparent to assume the regal functions; they were also opposed to any restrictions upon the prerogative. Mr. Canning argued strongly in support of the plan for appointing the Regent by Act of Parliament, but was opposed to any restrictions on the Regent.

The right [he said] of the two Houses was proclaimed by Mr. Pitt; that is the point on which his authority is valuable; on that point it was confirmed by both Houses, and acted upon by them to the fullest extent; and that proceeding of the two Houses it was which received the subsequent sanction of the Crown. The principles upon which this right was affirmed and exercised, if true at all, are true universally for all times and for all occasions. If they were the principles of the Constitution in 1788, they are so equally in 1810. The lapse of twenty-two years has not impaired—the lapse of centuries cannot impair them. But the mode in which the right so asserted should be exercised, the precise provisions to be framed for the temporary substitution of the executive power; these were necessarily then, as they

must be now, not matters of eternal and invariable principle, but of prudence and expediency.*

The principle that Parliament possessed the right of making the necessary provision for the exercise of the regal authority was affirmed by large majorities; the proposed mode of exercising the right—viz. by imposing restrictions on the Regent—was carried by very small majorities; and, in one point, with reference to the authority to be granted to the Queen, as custos of his Majesty's person, the Ministry were defeated.

On this question, Mr. Canning approved of the principle which the Government adopted, but disapproved of their practical application of it. Thus agreeing in their premises, but rejecting the conclusions which they drew from them.

The King was never restored to sanity, and the restrictions expired at the end of the year. From that time the real reign of the Prince of Wales began.

* December 31, 1810.

CHAPTER XV.

LORD WELLESLEY RESIGNS—PROPOSALS TO LORDS GREY AND GRENVILLE TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT—THE REGENT RETAINS MR. PERCEVAL'S MINISTRY—MR. PERCEVAL'S ASSASSINATION—NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORMING A NEW ADMINISTRATION IN 1812—WHIG CREED—LISBON EMBASSY.

BEFORE the restrictions on the powers of the Regent had expired, Lord Wellesley retired from the Foreign Office. 'He was willing to serve *with*, but would never again serve *under* Mr. Perceval.' This event is an example of the power of the First Minister. No two men were ever yoked together in a Cabinet whose characters were more directly opposite to each other. Perceval, steady, cautious, scrupulously upright, able, and determined; with great talents, but with no genius. Wellesley, with a brilliant genius, and a grasp of intellect capable of devising the most splendid and daring schemes of policy, and eager for their execution. Had they stood upon an equal footing, two such spirits might have worked harmoniously together, but it is no wonder that the restraints which the superior position of the one enabled him to impose, chafed and irritated past endurance the superior genius of the other. Lord Wellesley, who, in common with Mr. Canning, believed that our one chance of success on land, against Napoleon, lay in our prosecuting the war in the

Peninsula with all our resources, could not brook the impeding policy of Mr. Perceval, who looked to our finances, and did not sympathize in those views of ultimate triumph, in which Lord Wellesley so confidently indulged. Lord Wellesley's temperament was more sanguine, and he took a juster measure of his brother's abilities than his colleagues. He knew what stuff he was made of. Loudly and bitterly did he complain that the war was 'starved.' He was succeeded in the Foreign Office by Lord Castlereagh.

Shortly after Lord Wellesley's resignation the restrictions on the Regency expired. His Royal Highness had made known his intentions, while they lasted, to make no change. He deemed it to be most respectful to the King, whilst he held a delegated authority, limited, expressly in the hope that his Majesty might resume his functions, to continue his father's advisers in the posts in which they were when his illness began. Various were the influences which, it is said, were brought to bear upon the Regent to induce him to come to this resolution. Perceval and Eldon are accused of having used unworthy means to gain his favour. The Queen is said to have exerted her influence with her son, and his Royal Highness is represented to have been as 'impressible as wax.' But when all these representations are fairly valued, they amount to nothing more than that the Prince, being suddenly called to fill a very arduous post at a moment when the country was in great difficulty and danger, was more or less influenced by the opinions of those who surrounded him, and that those opinions were swayed by the sentiments, not excluding the interests, of those who gave them. The resolution

itself ought, however, to be judged on its own merits, and it can hardly be denied, whatever led to it, that, under the circumstances, it was very fitting and proper.

But it was confidently expected by the Whig party, when the restrictions should cease, that his Royal Highness, who had belonged to that party, would make some efforts to have his old companions as his confidential advisers. These expectations were doomed to end in disappointment; for, although the Regent addressed a letter to his brother the Duke of York, expressive of his wish, that Lords Grey and Grenville should 'strengthen his hands, and form a part of his Government;' yet, as he only desired that this might be accomplished by their joining the Ministry of Mr. Perceval, *not* by entrusting to them the formation of a new Ministry, his Royal Highness could hardly have anticipated any other answer than that which was returned—viz., that 'the differences of opinion' between the existing Government and themselves 'were too many and too important to admit of such an union.'

The opportunities which the year of restriction had afforded to the Ministers to ingratiate themselves personally with the Regent, and the 'increased and increasing reputation of his Majesty's arms,' which 'showed to the nations of the Continent how much 'they might still achieve when animated by a glorious spirit of resistance to a foreign yoke,'* had evidently made so strong an impression on the Regent's mind, that he was disinclined to place his

* The Regent's Letter to the Duke of York.

Government in the hands of men who had constantly been putting forth gloomy views of the prospects of the nation, and who had been opposed to our embarking in the Spanish contest. 'In the critical 'situation of the war in the Peninsula, I shall,' said H.R.H., 'be most anxious to avoid any measures 'which can lead my allies to suppose that I mean to 'depart from the present system.'*

That system, although it fell short of Lord Wellesley's requirements, was, nevertheless, one of perseverance in the war, which by this time began to wear a far more favourable aspect, so much so as materially to contribute to the stability of the Perceval Administration. That Administration was destined, however, to be short lived. On the 11th of May the deplorable assassination of Mr. Perceval took place in the lobby of the House of Commons.

This event, of course, necessitated a change in the Ministry.

Immediately after it occurred, the remaining members of the Cabinet deliberated whether they would be able to go on without they obtained more strength, by overtures either to Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, or to Lords Grey and Grenville.† They decided to invite the former, but the negotiations failed on the ground of the Roman Catholic question; Lord Wellesley subjoining, however, as an additional objection, that the war in Spain had not been prosecuted with sufficient energy by Mr. Perceval's Administration. To this objection Lord Liverpool replied, to

* The Regent's Letter to the Duke of York, Feb. 13, 1812.

† Twiss's *Life of Eldon.*

the effect that, it was the resources of the country, not the policy of the Government, which had imposed any limit on the exertions made to carry on the war, which it was the desire of the Ministers to strain every nerve to support.

After this effort to obtain increased strength, the Cabinet would probably have attempted to go on, had it not been for an address to the Regent, moved and carried by Mr. Stuart Wortley, on the 21st of May, to implore H.R.H. to form a strong and efficient Administration.

Upon this the Regent authorized Lord Wellesley to construct an Administration. His lordship's first step was to consult Mr. Canning; the result of their joint deliberations was, that Lord Wellesley made an offer to Lords Grey and Grenville to form part of the Government; and Mr. Canning made a similar offer to Lord Liverpool and his colleagues. The latter offer was at once refused; the directly opposite views taken by Lord Liverpool and his colleagues on the one hand, and Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning on the other, respecting concession to the Romanists, amply accounts for this rejection of the proposal, even if there had not been a determination on the part of the Ministers not to serve under Lord Wellesley.

The two principles on which Lord Wellesley proposed to form his Government in his negotiations with Lords Grey and Grenville were, (1.) an immediate consideration of the Roman Catholic claims, with a view to a conciliatory settlement; (2.) the prosecution of the war in the Peninsula. On the first there was a cordial agreement, on the second no

difference in principle, and a willingness to allow the mode and degree of prosecuting the war to be determined by a fair consideration of the circumstances of the case.

On grounds, therefore, of public policy there were no reasons why the two parties might not, at that period, have formed an united Administration; but there evidently was a lurking feeling in the minds of the noble lords, which augured ill for such a consummation. Lord Wellesley had received the royal commands, in the usual way, to construct an Administration; and, invested with that authority, he applied to those noblemen to join it; yet, when they placed their answer in Lord Wellesley's hand, they made the extraordinary remark, 'that there did not 'appear that there was any authority from the Prince 'to communicate with them, and, therefore, that they 'did not consider themselves as entered into a nego-'tiation for making an Administration.'*

To overcome this disinclination, Lord Wellesley, by the command of the Regent, made an offer to the Whig lords (which Mr. Canning afterwards described as 'generous, liberal, and even rash'), so to compose the Cabinet as to give them a majority of one. This offer was declined, on the plea that to construct a Cabinet on 'a system of counteraction, was incon-'sistent with the prosecution of any uniform and 'beneficial course of policy.' In short, they were not willing to take office with Lord Wellesley as Premier, neither were they willing to assign that

* *Memoirs of the Court of England during the Regency,* by the Duke of Buckingham, vol. i. p. 317.

ground as their real reason. A Whig authority correctly explains their views:—

> They were inclined to take advantage of every presentable ground for repudiating the advances made to them, and for justifying a refusal, unless they received a direct and unlimited authority for forming a Ministry.*

In other words, the Regent had himself chosen the First Minister, and he had not been selected by the great Whig party.

Mr. Canning told me that this was the real, but unavowed, cause of the breaking off of these negotiations. Strange as the doctrine may now seem, it doubtless is one which was received and acted upon by the Whigs, from the accession of the House of Hanover.

In the reign of George I. there are historical traces of this principle being in full force. Coxe relates that—

> The negotiation for settling the new Administration [February, 1721] had been entrusted by Devonshire and Townshend to the management of Walpole,† and it was not without great difficulty that Sunderland, who maintained the most unbounded influence over the Sovereign, had been induced, or rather *compelled,* to consent to the proposed arrangement. (This arrangement was one for placing Sir Robert himself in the post of Prime Minister.) Now it is the King who by the Constitution ought 'to entrust' to his subject the 'settlement' of a new Administration; but here 'Devonshire and Townshend,' the Whig leaders, 'entrust,' with that delicate commission, a third person, who evidently carries it out contrary to the wishes of the Sovereign; inasmuch as Sunderland, the person who decidedly possessed his Majesty's confidence, would not consent to it until he was 'compelled.'

* *Edin. Review.*

† Sir Robert Walpole.

This certainly looks as if the King had been allowed a very small voice (if, indeed, he were allowed any) in the choice of his own servants.

Again, in the reign of George II., in Lord John Russell's Introduction to the first volume of the *Bedford Correspondence*, there is an account of the King being prevented from employing Lord Carteret by the Pelhams, who formed a Cabinet of fifteen individuals, nine of whom were dukes. How unacceptable this arrangement was to his Majesty Lord John shows by the conversation which he records between the King and the Lord Chancellor,* in which the former declares that he had put all the power into their hands, 'having been forced and threatened.' And though the Chancellor, in this 'very curious conversation,' tries to soothe his Sovereign, yet Lord John cannot resist remarking, that 'however Lord Hardwicke might disguise the matter, the 'King must have felt that his favourite plans had been 'thwarted, and his favourite Minister displaced.'

This fully accounts for the dislike manifested by George III. for the Whig system; and for there escaping from his lips the declaration, that 'he never would, upon any account, 'suffer those Ministers of the late reign, who had attempted 'to fetter and enslave him, to come into his service while he 'held the sceptre.'

That this claim by the party to nominate the First Minister was acted upon by one of the Whig chiefs (the Duke of Bedford) in the early years of George III., is evident from an account which is also given by Lord John Russell in his introduction to the third volume of that nobleman's correspondence. On Lord Bute's resignation, the post of Premier was offered by the King to Mr. George Grenville, and *accepted;* that done, Lord Bute, by the King's command, next applied to the Duke of Bedford, entreating him 'to 'come to the assistance of his young Sovereign, and to hold 'the office of President of the Council,' adding, that 'it was 'the King's intention to employ the Whigs, and place his

* Lord Hardwicke.

'chief dependence upon them.' Now, here was as flattering and agreeable an offer as could well be made by a sovereign to his subject. He is entreated 'to come to the assistance of his young Sovereign;' he is told that a Whig, a member of his own party, is already in possession of the principal post; and moreover, that it was 'the King's intention to 'employ men of his own party, and to place his chief depend-'ence upon them.' What more could he want? Nevertheless, Lord John tells us, that 'the Duke of Bedford did not 'listen to these overtures. He stated in reply his unwilling-'ness to accept office; and even if that unwillingness were 'less, the hopelessness of maintaining successfully so weak an 'Administration, especially when Lord Bute himself should 'have withdrawn.' Now this unwillingness was overcome very shortly afterwards, therefore *that* could not have been a very cogent reason for not even listening to such a proposal; and as for the weakness of the Administration, what reasonable ground had the duke for assuming that weakness, when he was told that the Ministry was to be composed of his own Whig friends, on whom the King promised to place his chief dependence? Lord Bute's retirement was evidently rather a source of strength than weakness. He was the most unpopular man at that time in the King's dominions, and as his retirement was voluntary, there was no kind of reason to fear that the King would not give his confidence to his successors, especially as they were the very persons whom Lord Bute was recommending to succeed him. And indeed, so little consequence did the duke really attach to Lord Bute's remaining in office, that when, shortly after, he did take office, Lord Bute's exclusion was made by him a *sine quâ non* condition.

The unwillingness then to accept office, the withdrawal of Lord Bute, and the weakness of the future Government, were evidently not the real reasons for the refusal, and if they stood alone there would be little insight into the true motives which actuated the duke. But Lord John's next sentence solves the mystery:—'He (the duke) advised, therefore, that the 'great Whig families *should be summoned*, and an *Administra-'tion formed of their friends and connexions*.' (vol. iii. p. 36.)

The difficulty the duke was in was this—the King had already nominated the Prime Minister;—and it was a fundamental article of the Whig creed, that the Prime Minister should be nominated by *the Whig party*.

It is true that the duke, when he shortly after accepted office under Mr. Grenville, did so in violation of this principle; yet this is no reason for doubting that, in the first instance, he was guided by it, for Lord John assigns as the grounds for his acceptance that 'his inclinations were changed 'when he found himself proscribed,' and that he did it 'in the '*heat of his indignation*,' influenced by the King's personal 'request.' The fact being that the duke's advice to summon the great Whig families having been rejected, on further difficulties arising, his Grace was again applied to. This time he recommended the King to send for Mr. Pitt;* and this time the King followed the advice. Mr. Pitt, however, in ignorance that he was sent for by the duke's recommendation, curiously enough made at the outset the absolute exclusion of the Duke of Bedford a condition of his acceptance of office. Hence the duke's indignation, and hence (the negotiations with Mr. Pitt having failed) his abandonment, in his anger, of the principles by which, at the first, he had been guided.

That this is the true explanation of the duke's conduct is hardly doubtful, when it is considered that this transaction does not stand alone, but that the pages of history afford the strongest confirmation of the actual engrossment in the Whig creed of the principle in question. When Lord Rockingham died, the Whigs considered the Duke of Portland as their chief. The King, however, appointed Lord Shelburne First Minister, on which Mr. Fox, Lord John Cavendish, and Mr. Burke immediately resigned.

When Pitt was empowered to invite Mr. Fox to return to the Cabinet, the first question asked by the latter was, 'Is 'Lord Shelburne to remain Premier?' On Pitt answering, 'Certainly;' 'It is impossible,' rejoined Fox, 'that I can act 'under him.'

---

* Afterwards Lord Chatham.

A few years afterwards, this dogma was publicly proclaimed, in the clearest way, by Mr. Pitt, in the House of Commons, *in the presence of Mr. Fox*, who left it not only uncontradicted, but *unnoticed*.

'It was well known,' said Mr. Pitt, 'to be the avowed 'system of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) and his party, 'to endeavour by the weight and extent of their political in-'fluence to nominate the Ministers of the Crown. It could 'not be denied that they maintained, as a fundamental maxim, 'that THE Minister ought at all times to be so nominated.'—Dec. 16, 1788.

It was this strange principle, thus publicly set forth by Mr. Pitt, which repeatedly influenced negotiations with the Whig party in different periods of the reign. In 1783, shortly after the dismissal of the Goalition Administration, a recommendation was made by an association of Members of Parliament, respectively, to Mr. Pitt, as the head of the Government, and the Duke of Portland, as leader of the Whigs, that the two parties should coalesce. Mr. Pitt replied, that 'He should be very happy to pay attention to the 'commands of so respectable a meeting, and to co-operate 'with their wishes to form a stronger and more extended Ad-'ministration, if the same could be done with principle and 'honour.' But the Duke of Portland replied, that *he* 'should 'think himself happy in obeying the commands of so respect-'able a meeting, but that the greatest difficulty to him, and '*he imagined to Mr. Pitt*, was Mr. Pitt's being in office.' In other words, that Mr. Pitt was nominated by the Crown, and not by the Whig party; and, that Mr. Pitt could hardly be expected to concede this right of the Crown; while the Duke of Portland could not surrender the Whig claim, that that nomination should be made by the party of which he was the head.

Again, in 1792, when Mr. Pitt was very anxious at that alarming crisis to unite all parties in his Government, the negotiations were hardly entertained by the Whigs, in consequence of this dogma. 'The Duke of Portland' (says Lord Malmesbury, July 23, 1792, who was in all the secrets of the party) 'still persists in his idea of the necessity of Pitt's

'quitting the Treasury, which I never could, or can, consider 'as quite necessary, or as quite reasonable' (vol. ii. p. 468). But although the Duke of Portland abandoned the 'idea,' when, a few months after, alarmed by the events which were passing around him, he patriotically joined Mr. Pitt, yet, the great Whig leader, Mr. Fox, was immovable. 'Fox,' says Lord Malmesbury, July 30, 1792, 'made Pitt's quitting the 'Treasury a *sine quâ non*, and was so opinionative and fixed 'about it, that it was impossible even to reason with him on 'the subject' (vol. ii. p. 472).

The adherence of the Whig leaders to this principle was the real cause of the failure of the negotiation with Lord Wellesley: Lord Wellesley was nominated by the Crown, and *not* by the great Whig party.

Mr. Canning, in the debate* on these negotiations, thus adverted to this doctrine:—

The right hon. gentleman, and those on his side of the House, seemed to consider that the great families and connexions of this country had a right to interfere in the nomination of Ministers. He certainly did not believe in any such right or pretension in the aristocracy. He thought that in the very best spirit of the Constitution the Crown had exclusively the appointment of Ministers, subject, of course, to the control or advice of a free Parliament. He did not, however, blame many of the gentlemen opposite for holding such an opinion. It was one that did not want the sanction of exalted authority; for even that great man, whose genius, infinitely more than that of all his contemporaries, would mark our time with posterity, Mr. Burke himself,† held that opinion.‡

* May 21, 1812.

† *Thoughts on the Present Discontents.*

‡ This Whig principle explains the meaning of that which Mr. Twiss (in his *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 145) thinks remarkable, but of which he does not see the force—viz., George III., in his correspondence with Mr. Addington, emphatically describes him as '*my* Chancellor of the Exchequer,' and also Lord Eldon as '*my* Lord Chancellor.'

These negotiations having thus failed, the Regent fell back upon those who had formed Mr. Perceval's Cabinet. His Royal Highness adopted the unprecedented course of commanding his servants to elect the First Minister. Their choice fell upon Lord Liverpool.

One of his lordship's first steps was to negotiate with Mr. Canning. They had always entertained for each other feelings of warm personal friendship. A community of opinion on all political subjects, except that relating to the Roman Catholics, existed between them. With Lord Castlereagh he had been for some time reconciled, and the Cabinet were desirous to have the benefit of his aid. Lord Castlereagh, in order to secure it, was willing to resign the Foreign Office. Nearly all Mr. Canning's political adherents were to have been admitted to official stations. Lord Wellesley was to have gone to Ireland. Mr. Canning more than once described this offer to me as 'perhaps the handsomest that ever was made to an individual.' Lord Castlereagh was, however,

To retain the lead in the House of Commons. Some of Mr. Canning's friends suggested, that if he had not the lead, the offer ought not to be accepted. He was not himself of that opinion. The point was referred to three members of the House of Commons who were supposed to be particularly conversant with the usages of the House; they decided that he ought to insist on the lead; and the negotiation fell to the ground.*

There is, however, a letter from Mr. Canning, written about this time, to Mr. Wilberforce, and pub-

* *Political Life*, vol. i. p. 67.

lished in his *Life*,* which, at first sight, appears hardly consistent with this version of the transaction, inasmuch as it decidedly defends the course which was adopted. It is evidently, however, not a balancing of arguments on both sides to determine which would preponderate, but a reply (to a remonstrance from Mr. Wilberforce against the decision), in order to show that there were abundant reasons to justify it. It having been irrevocably taken, no doubt Mr. Canning at the time pressed into the service everything that could be urged in its favour, in order to reconcile it to himself. This seems to be the true solution of the apparent discrepancy.

The decision was for a long while ruinous to Mr. Canning's prospects. Although Lord Liverpool and others of the Cabinet never ceased to desire his co-operation, yet the Government was so strong, such a halo of glory was thrown around them by the triumphs in the Peninsula and the downfall of Napoleon, that they no longer needed any accession of strength.

All likelihood of the offer being repeated conceding the disputed point seemed to have vanished; and it was not in mortal man not to feel regret that he had no share in the counsels of the Crown, when the policy which he had originated, and which he had so long earnestly supported, when many pronounced it hopeless, was producing the most triumphant results. He had also the annoyance of witnessing the chosen band of friends, who had dis-

* *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. iv. p. 46.

interestedly been content to share his fortunes, in the same predicament with himself. It was then that he resolved to free them from their allegiance; and in the year 1813, he formally disbanded his party, leaving to all to take, irrespective of himself, the course which might seem to each the most advisable.

In the autumn of 1814, after Napoleon had gone to Elba, Mr. Canning, on account of the feeble health of his eldest son, had made up his mind to pass the winter at Lisbon. When Lord Liverpool learnt his intentions, on consultation with Lord Castlereagh, they determined to offer and to press upon him the post of ambassador at Lisbon—at the same time that offices were given to Mr. Huskisson, Lord Binning, and others of his friends. Mr. Canning accepted. By those who wish to look into particulars, and to find an example of how a noble and generous nature can defend itself when unjustly assailed with calumny, Mr. Canning's speech on the Lisbon embassy will be read with admiration and interest. Nine years after the event, when travelling to Ickworth, he said to me, 'I consider my having accepted the Lisbon 'embassy as a great political mistake; in all pro-'bability I should have had the most influential 'post in the Government in the House of Commons 'long before, had I not fallen into that error. I 'laboured hard to avoid accepting the appointment, 'but it was so urged upon me by the King's Govern-'ment, that I thought I had not the moral right, as 'a public man, to refuse it. If, therefore, the thing 'were now, with past experience, to be done over 'again, I should act the same part, and, conscious of 'right, I must brave the consequences.'

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CURRENCY—AND FINANCE.

THE celebrated Bullion Committee sat in the year 1810. Their report produced, and is still producing, interminable controversies. Mr. Horner, the Chairman of the Committee, in 1811, moved in the House of Commons certain resolutions founded on the report, on which Mr. Canning made one of his most celebrated speeches. The next week, Mr. Vansittart* moved other counter-resolutions, on which Mr. Canning again spoke at length.

The Bullion Committee were appointed to inquire into the state of the currency, in consequence of the great difference between the market value and the denominational value of Bank notes, measured in the gold coinage. This difference could not have existed if Bank notes had been payable in gold coin on demand.

But in 1797, in consequence of a demand upon the Bank for gold, continued for a time, and in a degree altogether unusual, and arising from a combination of untoward circumstances and events, partly political, and partly commercial, the directors of that institution felt themselves bound to state to the Government the unprecedented difficulties and embarrassments of their situation.

It is but justice to them to remark, that they did not resort to this measure till they had tried, and found unavailing, all those means of checking the drain of cash which

* Then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

had been effectual on former occasions. On these former occasions the directors had uniformly found, that to lessen the amount of their paper issues, was the sure mode of checking and ultimately stopping the demand for gold. It was natural for them, as practical men, to follow their established course; but when they found that, *instead of abating*, the drain increased every day *in proportion as they contracted the amount of their paper*, it was equally natural for them to mistrust their own experience.

In this state of affairs the remedy which was applied to the difficulties of the Bank and of the country, was an Act for the temporary suspension of cash payments.*

This is the statement made in the pamphlet called, *Depreciation of Currency*, published in 1810, and written by Mr. Huskisson, an important member of the Bullion Committee, who took an active part in drawing up the report.

From 1797 to 1808, a period of eleven years, Bank notes and gold coin preserved an equal (or nearly so) denominational value. In 1808, and following years, there was a great change in this respect. Guineas, which nominally were worth no more than a 1*l.* note and one shilling, could not be purchased in the market for less than a 1*l.* note and five to seven shillings additional.

The Bullion Committee, in its report, and in the resolutions of its chairman, laid down the true principles of our monetary system. The conclusion which they drew from them was, that the Bank ought, within two years, to be compelled to resume cash payments. The counter-resolutions of the Government contained a whole mass of statistics, from which were drawn inferences opposed to the principles

* Page 8.

laid down by the bullionists; and one resolution of the Government affirmed what was directly at variance with acknowledged fact—that a *1l.* note and a shilling were, 'in public estimation, equal to a guinea of full weight.' The conclusion aimed at by the Government was, that the Bank ought not to resume cash payments 'till six months after the conclusion of a definitive treaty of peace.'

Mr. Canning took a somewhat anomalous course with respect to these two sets of resolutions. He agreed with the bullionists in all the principles which they laid down, but he was opposed to their conclusion. He disagreed *in totò* with the Government in all the principles set forth in their resolutions; he, nevertheless, approved of their conclusion. From the premises of the one he arrived at the conclusion of the other. He accepted the opinion that the depreciation of the Bank notes was owing to their being in excess, but thought it unfair to the Bank to alter the contract which the Act of Parliament had fixed—viz., six months after peace—for the resumption of cash payments; he thought that

> Too sudden a contraction of Bank issues might be productive of alarming effects, and that the House would do as much as it could do at that moment, if it strengthened, by a declaration of opinion, the foundations of the money system of the country, and re-established the credit of the true standard of our currency, at a moment when it was attempted to be brought into doubt and disrepute.*

The main question, however, is, to this day, a disputed question, even by those who adopt the money theory of the bullionists, whether the notes of the

* Canning's *Speeches,* vol. iii. p. 232.

Bank of England were really depreciated from the year 1808 to the year 1814, during all which time the difference existed in their respective nominal values:—

The answer of the bullionists to this question is in the affirmative. On the other hand, no one can give a positive answer in the negative, as it certainly cannot be proved that there was no depreciation: there might or there might not have been, to the amount (at the most) of two or three per cent. But, according to the bullionists, the depreciation averaged during those six years twenty-five per cent., fluctuating between twenty and thirty. They argued, that the difference between the Mint and the market price of gold was at once the proof and the measure of the depreciation.

It may be said that, if any depreciation be admitted, it is only a difference *in degree;* yet, *that degree* constitutes a fundamental difference: and although it may be impossible to disprove a degree, it is only because the peculiar circumstances which produced the apparent full extent, were such as, in this particular case, to destroy the chief test by which, in ordinary times, either the fact or the degree must be ultimately ascertained.

In order to bring this question fairly to issue, it is necessary, for accuracy's sake, to define the meaning of the word depreciation.

Depreciation in a national currency, then, *only* occurs when it becomes less valuable than that of foreign countries; that is, when, *cæteris paribus*, more of it must be given for commodities in general use than, if taken to those foreign countries, need be there given for a like quantity of like commodities.

Any currency, whether composed wholly of paper or wholly of coin, or of paper and coin conjointly, may become depreciated from excess.

An invariable measure of value, Mr. Ricardo admits, does not exist: consequently, 'nothing,' he says, 'is so difficult to ascertain as a variation of value.' For reasons of which

all must admit the validity, the same authority adds, 'Commodities generally can never become a *standard* to regulate the quantity and value of money.' But gold is a commodity, liable, like all other commodities, to be affected in its value by supply and demand. In ordinary circumstances, less perhaps than any other known substance, and therefore, in ordinary circumstances, the best standard and measure of value that can be taken; but still *variable*, and therefore *not*, under *all* circumstances, to be recognised as infallible, although necessarily adopted.

From 1808 to 1814 we had a currency of Bank of England paper, not convertible at will into gold coin: and the fact is now undisputed, that during all that time the average *market* value of the notes in gold coin, or gold bullion, was less by twenty-five per cent. than their *nominal* value.

The bullionists accounted for this difference, or, as they called it, this depreciation, by the excess in the quantity of paper in circulation: 'the high price of bullion,' they argued, 'incontrovertibly proves the depreciation; the depreciation proves the excess.' They would consent to no other measure of value being adopted except the precious metals: and, as they truly stated, 'the whole dispute turned upon the question, whether gold and silver was or was not the fit measure 'of the value of Bank notes.' This is the sum and substance of the dispute, to which all the arguments of the bullionists were turned: and although they stated them in a thousand different ways, they were always directed to establish the truth of this identical proposition.

On the other hand, their opponents contended that *it was not that Bank notes had fallen, but that the precious metals had risen in value:* and had those who propounded this opinion, instead of attacking the doctrines of the Committee, which were true, attacked their facts, which were false—and had they simply assigned the true reason of the difference, the truth of the above proposition would, probably, have been made so apparent, as to have been acknowledged by all parties. But unfortunately the anti-bullionists sought to establish their case, not so much by an appeal to facts (which

would have proved it), as by abstract reasons, which were erroneous; so that the bullionists, instead of being compelled to apply themselves to disprove the proposition itself, contented themselves with disproving the arguments and statements by which it was attempted to be maintained, and which, from being essentially false, there was, consequently, no difficulty in overthrowing.

Before, however, touching upon these proceedings of the anti-bullionists, it is best to state the theory of the bullionists; and then test it by facts. Now, there is no doctrine more clearly deducible from the principles of the bullionists than that the effect of a depreciated currency is to raise the price of ALL commodities in that currency, in direct proportion to the extent of the depreciation. The price of particular commodities may indeed be so affected by the supply and demand as even, in a depreciating currency, to fall in price: but that that price would have fallen still lower if the currency had not been depreciated, is a proposition which is necessarily implied by the doctrine of depreciation.

It will accordingly be found that, in all the treatises on this question put forth by the bullionists, the high price in Bank notes of commodities in general, from the year 1808 to 1814, is invariably assumed as an incontrovertible fact, and argued upon as a true one.

'When gold and silver, and *almost all other commodities*, 'were raised in price, during the last twenty years,' says Mr. Ricardo, in 1816, 'instead of ascribing any part of this rise 'to the fall of the paper currency, the supporters of an ab-'stract currency had always some good reason at hand for the 'alteration in price.'*

'From the abettors of the present state of things,' says Mr. Huskisson, in his pamphlet (in 1810), 'when they have 'been referred to the rapid rise in the price of ALL *ordinary* 'commodities as a very strong indication of the depreciation 'of our currency, I have often heard,' &c., &c. [page 87, new

* *Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency*, by David Ricardo, Esq., 2nd ed. p. 17.

edition, 1819]. Again he says, 'Has the price of commo-'dities in this country fallen within these two years? Is not 'the contrary notoriously the fact?' [page 42.] And again, in his speech in Parliament in 1811, he observes, 'Where were the proofs of this scarcity?' (of gold.) 'He was aware 'of none; but of this he was confident, that when gold was 'scarce, other commodities must become cheap. Would gen-'tlemen try the question by this test? Was it the fact that 'other commodities had become cheap?'

Lastly, the Bullion Committee say, in their report [page 5], 'An increased demand for gold, and consequent scarcity 'of that article, will make it more valuable in proportion to 'all other articles. . . . . The money price of gold will remain 'unaltered, but the prices of all other commodities will fall. 'That this is not the present state of things is absolutely 'manifest, *the prices of* ALL *commodities* have risen, and gold 'appears to have risen in its price only in common with them.'

And again [page 8] they say, 'In this manner a *general* '*rise of* ALL *prices*, a rise in the market price of gold, and a 'fall in the foreign exchanges, will be the effect of an exces-'sive quantity of circulating medium in a country which has 'adopted a currency not exportable to other countries, or not 'convertible at will into a coin which is exportable.'

After these quotations (which it would be easy to multiply) from the writings and speeches of the most celebrated bullionists, the following conclusions can hardly be disputed to be legitimately derived from them.

1. That a depreciated currency necessarily causes ALL commodities to rise in price, in direct proportion to the extent and progress of the depreciation, of which it is an essential co-existent symptom.

2. That from the year 1808 to the year 1814, there was in this country a general rise in the prices of *all* commodities.

3. That this rise of prices was in a great degree occasioned by the depreciation in the currency, in consequence of its excess.

To establish these conclusions of the bullionists upon an immovable foundation, it must be admitted, on all hands,

that one thing is, at least, essential—viz., that the rise in the price, or the high price of ALL commodities, which was thus proclaimed by the bullionists, was a fact that did not admit of dispute—was a test by which, admitting the truth of their abstract principles, the accuracy of their conclusions may be fairly tried.

What words, then, can be too strong to express the surprise which a person about to apply this test must experience, when, after having perused the speeches and other publications of the bullionists, he discovers that the real fact was directly the reverse of the assumed one: that, instead of ALL commodities having risen, and bearing high prices in the paper currency of the country, one class—and that the most important class—so far as it affected the question at issue, were singularly cheap: that, although it is quite true that all commodities which we produced or imported *for our own consumption*, were dear, yet it is not less true that all those commodities which were either imported or produced *for exportation*, were unusually cheap: that our coffee, our sugar, our cottons, and our hardware, were, *as compared with the continental prices*, extraordinarily low, even when measured in Bank of England notes.

This is a question of fact. It is one which may easily be determined by reference to existing documents. If misstated, nothing is more easy to prove than the misstatement. But if, on the other hand, the statement be correct, then how is it possible to reconcile with the principles of the money theory of the bullionists, the fact of a depreciated currency co-existing with a low price *in that currency* of *all* our exportable goods—*low*, not with reference to former or subsequent prices, but low with reference to the cotemporaneous prices measured in that depreciated currency on the continent of Europe.

A currency depreciated by excess (and it is of that kind of depreciation of which alone there is question) means that it is of less value than the currency of foreign countries—that is, that a given quantity will, *cæteris paribus*, command, in the country where it circulates, a smaller quan-

tity of commodities in general than in foreign countries—but so far was this from being the state of our currency, that a single Bank note for 1*l.* would, in London, buy either fifteen shillings or thirty-two pounds of coffee, when fifteen shillings at Hamburgh or Amsterdam would not purchase more than five pounds of coffee: while the said thirty-two pounds, if sent to Hamburgh or Amsterdam, would procure six fifteen shillings, which, transmitted to England, would buy six 1*l.* Bank notes; and a similar consequence, though not quite to so great an extent, would have resulted from a similar transaction in all our other exportable commodities.

If this fact be admitted, it is impossible to have co-existed with a currency depreciated by its redundance; for—depreciated with reference to what?—redundant with reference to what?—not to the currencies of continental Europe, when tried by the test of mercantile interchange, for then it would have been a more lucrative transaction to have remitted gold to the Continent than goods; whereas gold was sent at a manifest loss as compared with goods, which might have been sent at a computable gain of some hundreds per cent.

This test therefore fails; and, rejecting the explanations thus suggested by the bullionists of the very extraordinary state of things at the time referred to, there must be some other solution of the enigma; and, in carefully perusing the speeches of the antagonists of the Committee, here and there a ray of the true light seems to have broken in upon them. Unfortunately, however, it was so blended with false doctrines, erroneous assertions, and mistaken objects, that it failed in attracting general attention in the way that it ought. Twice, and only twice, in the course of those long discussions which took place in Parliament, was the all-important fact mentioned or alluded to, that *some* commodities had fallen, and not risen, in price. Mr. Vansittart remarks, that 'although the price of provisions had been high, *that* of most articles of merchandise was considerably reduced.'* And Lord Castlereagh (whose speech was, perhaps, the best which

* Cobbett's *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xix. p. 941.

was delivered on the question) observed that, 'so far from 'prices having advanced in the last two or three years .... 'he believed the fact to be the reverse—that in the three last 'years, when the excess of notes has been most complained 'of, there had been rather a decline than an advance in the 'prices current.' But how little the party were aware of the value of this remarkable fact, is evident from the circumstance that one of their most celebrated members, Mr. George Rose, in 'adverting to the rapid advance in the price of our com- 'modities,' observed, '*that they had risen was a fact beyond* '*dispute.*' An admission on which Mr. Huskisson commented at length, but which no one of the anti-bullionists thought of sufficient consequence specifically either to correct or to deny.

But, although Mr. Vansittart showed that he had not omitted to consider this essential element for arriving at a just conclusion, yet, if proof were wanted of how inextricably the anti-bullionists contrived to intermingle error with truth, that proof is furnished by the paragraph which next succeeds this one in Mr. Vansittart's speech. 'I think, therefore,' continued that right honourable gentleman, 'that the Bul- 'lion Committee have as little foundation in fact for asserting 'that our currency has lost in value in comparison with 'other articles, *as for stating that the notes of the Bank* '*of England are depreciated in comparison with our legal* '*money.*'

Now, if Mr. Vansittart had contented himself with proving that Bank notes had not lost a part of their value when compared with ALL other articles of purchase, he would, even if he had not established his own case, have nevertheless overthrown that which was maintained by his opponents. But he sought to prove too much when he attempted to prove what was notoriously false, that Bank notes were, 'in public estimation,' of equal value with the legal coin which they professed to represent. And it was this unlucky attempt on his part, in which he was supported by all the anti-bullionists when they voted for his third resolution, affirming this equality, which threw such discredit on a

cause whose supporters, after all, advocated the wisest practical conclusion.

But not on this point alone were the anti-bullionists in error. Mr. Vansittart denied the truth of the doctrine that the value of a paper currency could be affected by its quantity; while the Bank directors and their advocates, 'seeking to establish principles of currency upon which a cash 'suspension might be defended at all times,' boldly argued that 'their paper could not be in excess, if they confined 'their discounts of commercial bills to those of undoubted 'solidity.' In this they were backed by Mr. Vansittart, who asked, in a somewhat contemptuous tone, 'What is the 'real meaning of a depreciation compared with the money of 'foreign countries? *Has it any meaning at all?*'*

It can hardly be doubted that it was this overlaying of truth with error which prevented the facts and reasoning of the anti-bullionists from being fairly appreciated by their opponents. For otherwise, when Lord Castlereagh stated the following view of the cause of the anomalous and unexampled state of things, it surely would have made a stronger impression than it did. 'So long as goods could be applied 'to settle the account,' said his lordship, 'the price of bul-'lion would not rise materially above its natural price. *But 'now goods cannot be sent as in ordinary times. It is not 'price* which limits the quantity of our exports; *it is the risk 'and difficulty of introducing them into the Continent*, where 'they sell at an advance of more than 100 per cent.'

Here, then, we have distinctly set forth a cause which, while it surely affords a satisfactory explanation of all the phenomena which marked that extraordinary period, likewise not only leaves wholly unimpaired the abstract theory of the bullionists, but actually furnishes an explanation of subsequent events, which serve to confirm in the clearest way the accuracy of their money doctrines. By their theory, it is true, some of the prevailing symptoms were perfectly accounted for; but its supporters neglected to seek that *instantia*

* Cobbett's *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xix. p. 951.

crucis in the process of induction, which would at once have shown that, however abstractedly true, it was not at that time practicably applicable. The phenomena to be accounted for was the great difference between the Mint and market price of gold. Excess, and consequent depreciation, would infallibly produce it: but depreciation could not exist without a corresponding rise in the prices of *all* commodities; but more especially would this rise occur in the prices of those goods which were the objects of our mercantile transactions with foreigners: now this rise not only did not take place, but, on the contrary, a fall took place in the price of those very articles: therefore depreciation is not a sufficient explanation of all the symptoms. Some explanation was therefore wanted which would at once reconcile these apparently conflicting, but nevertheless co-existing facts. Such explanation is supplied by admitting that the price of gold was raised in consequence of that excessive demand occasioned by the impossibility of our merchants paying for the vast quantity of goods which they were continually importing from the Continent in any other mode; that *its price was enhanced for the sake of its superior utility as a remittance;* because a guinea could be smuggled, when forty-two pounds of coffee, which it could purchase, could not be smuggled; or rather, because a guinea would have been admitted into the ports of our enemies without question, when the coffee would have been consigned to the flames.

But, further, this explanation does more; for it is the only supposition which clears up that which took place at, and immediately previous to, the restoration of peace—viz., the complete reversal of our mercantile position with the European continent.

Hemp, timber, corn, wine, every article usually imported from the Continent for our own consumption, fell greatly in price. Cottons, wool, sugars, coffee, and every article of our export trade, rose in nearly similar proportion. Gold fell; the exchanges rose, and an immense progress was made towards that natural level and relative position which mercantile affairs assume when left to their natural courses.

We held in this country surplus stocks of goods, applicable to exportation, sufficient to redeem for us all our proper stock of gold. With eagerness, and in haste, the foreigner produced the gold and took back the goods; giving us, *in gold*, far greater prices for the goods than they had before been selling for in Bank paper. If we had lost our gold by reason of the depreciation of our paper—that is to say, if the foreigner had rejected our goods because of their high prices, and taken our gold for the sake of its intrinsic value—we could only have tempted him to restore the gold by tendering to him our goods at very reduced prices. But the direct reverse of this took place, and a strong current of gold to England was cotemporaneous with a great increase of the money value of our exportable goods. In this way, very shortly after the termination of the war, without any contraction of Bank paper, the exchanges rose to par; and the Mint and market price of gold were within a fraction of each other.

Again, how is it possible to reconcile these facts with that of our paper currency having been depreciated by excess?

That gold is a standard subject to variations in value, Mr. Ricardo does not refuse to admit; and, after pointing out that 'against such variation there is no possible remedy,' he frankly adds, 'that late events have proved that, during 'periods of war, when gold and silver are used for the pay-'ment of large armies distant from home, these variations 'are much more considerable than has been generally allowed. 'This admission,' he adds, 'only proves that gold and silver 'are not so good a standard as they have been hitherto sup-'posed; that they are themselves subject to greater varia-'tions than it is desirable a standard should be subject to.' Now, although the author of these sentences concludes the paragraph with as dogmatic and uncompromising an assertion of the bullion doctrines as language would allow of—saying that the proposition is 'unanswered and unanswerable;' that 'while these metals are the standard, the cur-'rency should conform in value to them; and that whenever 'it does not, and the market price of bullion is above the

'Mint price, the currency is depreciated'—yet the admission which he makes is most important in confirming the explanation here given. All which is contended for is, that gold acquired a temporary and artificial value in consequence of an unnatural demand for it to serve a particular purpose; and that because, in consequence, the market price of that '*commodity*' rose above the Mint price, it is an incorrect inference to draw, that our paper currency was depreciated with reference to the currencies of *foreign* countries.

That it was depreciated with reference to gold cannot be denied, because when two commodities, once equal in value, are compared with each other, one of which has remained stationary while the other has advanced, the stationary one is depreciated in comparison with the other. But this is not the depreciation meant by the bullionists; had it been, they would not have laid so much stress on the foreign exchanges.

If this view, then, of the cause of the difference of price in the nominal value of the gold and the paper currency be a correct one, it establishes the sagacity of the course taken by Mr. Canning. Although he was fully convinced of the truth of their money theory, he had a strong misgiving as to its applicability, with safety, to the then existing state of affairs. The phenomenon of difference in value, it should be remembered, had no existence for eleven years after the suspension of cash payments by the Bank. No sooner were the Berlin and Milan Decrees, forbidding intercourse with the Continent, backed by the British Orders in Council, than the phenomenon was manifested in almost its full intensity; no sooner was the intercourse removed, than, without any extraordinary action on the part of the Bank or the Government, the phenomenon wholly disappeared.

In these bullion controversies Mr. Peel was a zealous opponent of the doctrines of the bullionists; but before many years had elapsed he abandoned his principles, and the Act of Parliament which, in 1819, compelled the restoration of cash payments, was brought in by him, and bears his name.

The history of the different fluctuations in the currency, and in our commercial affairs, from the period of the Bullion Committee to Mr. Canning's death, is to be found at length in the *Political Life*, vol. iii. chap. 18.

In the summer of 1825, the Parliament having sat for six years, the expediency of dissolving at once, or of allowing the septennial course to run out, was discussed by the members of the Cabinet. Mr. Huskisson recorded his views on the subject in a letter to Mr. Canning, in which he predicted that panic and universal distress which took place in the middle of the ensuing December:—

Eartham, Sept. 4, 1825.

I will divide what has occurred to me, as you have done, under two heads: first, the general state of the country; and, secondly, the Catholic Question.

If I admit for the present Liverpool's position,—that the inconvenience of the latter question will be as much felt in a dissolution, come when it *may* (or rather when it *must*, next year) as this autumn,—his argument is confined solely to the general state of the country. The favourable and abundant harvest I fully acknowledge. Had it been the reverse, I scarcely dare contemplate the difficulties with which we should have been beset. But notwithstanding this great element of ease and good-humour, are there no signs that the beautiful season, which produced it, may soon be interrupted by some heavy, though, I trust, passing clouds, gathering from other quarters, to cast a temporary gloom on the

general prosperity? Once or twice, before the end of the session, I warned the Cabinet to look with suspicion at symptoms, which proved to me that the Bank, in its greedy folly, was playing over again the game of 1817, and that in their consequences the inordinate speculations, commercial and pecuniary, to which that game was giving rise, would lead either to a second stoppage, or a serious revulsion, affecting public and private credit; and by its results the prosperity of our industrious classes. Had the harvest been a bad one, the second stoppage, rely upon it, would have taken place. But even this good harvest, though it will save us from the worst of evils and disgraces, will not prevent very serious losses and misfortunes in many quarters. It is impossible that the shock (necessary, I daresay, for the safety of the Bank) which confidence has lately received in the capital, should not reverberate, in the next three months, through every part of a system which rests so much upon artificial credit; and that stagnation and other evil effects should not be more or less felt by the busy part of our population. Some will be altogether ruined; many will suffer heavy losses; and a general depression of employment, more or less severe, must ensue. These evils, I am convinced, will be only temporary; but how rapidly they may come upon us, how far they may go, and when they may cease, are points which may be so much influenced and varied by circumstances, and by the measures of others, that I will not even hazard a conjecture. Believe me, I do not refer to these things, as far as their accomplishment has begun, from any desire to appear a prophet, but from a conviction that they ought not to be lost sight of, in considering the question of dissolution at the end of this month.

The effects of the good harvest *will* last through the year, the effects of this pressure *may* pass away before next May or June. No man can say positively whether they will or will not, or that some other difficulty may not arise; and this, I own, takes away from the weight due to the consideration.

I am clear, however, that if dissolution we are to have, it

cannot be too much expedited, as I am persuaded that the effects of the present pressure will not be felt in their *full extent* till a later period of the autumn.

How nearly this prediction of a 'second stoppage' was fulfilled, is shown by the following memorandum, made by me at the time when the incident took place, and which is given *verbatim*:—

Dec. 27, 1825.

Mr. Canning proposed to me to walk with him to Lord Liverpool's, where he was going. As soon as we left the Foreign Office, he observed that Cobbett might now rejoice, but though he might be right in one thing, he would be wrong in another; he had no doubt but that Cobbett's writings had greatly aggravated the panic. For, he said, the Cabinet, which was held at the Foreign Office overnight, and sat from nine o'clock in the evening till two in the morning, had decided against sanctioning the suspension of cash payments by the Bank, which the Bank had applied for. It appeared, he said, that the Bank had upwards of a million's worth of uncoined gold in their coffers, but that they had neglected in times of abundance to send it to be coined to the Mint, which was now at work night and day, but could only coin 200,000*l.* in the week. He said it was quite obvious that the object of most of the old school of Bank directors, was to force the Government to sanction a suspension of cash payments, and therefore that they took no measures to provide for such a crisis as the present, which they probably foresaw, thinking the Government would help them. That such fools as —— had always been against Peel's Bill, but that if the Government once sanctioned another suspension of cash payments, we never should have a tolerable currency again. That the Bank was like any other trading corporation, and must manage their own concerns; that in 1797 the Government wanted their specie to send abroad to carry on the war, but now it was no such thing; that the different interests of the country were all in a flourishing state; that the stoppage would only

be temporary, and that it would cause incalculably less disaster, if only the act of the Bank unsanctioned by the Government. He said, if they got over to-day, they would do, as gold was coming in so fast from all quarters, that they would be able to surmount their difficulties.

The Bank had paid away upwards of seven millions during the week, and when they applied to the Government for the suspension, they had only 8000 sovereigns left.

After the Cabinet had determined not to comply with the request, orders had been given to the regiment of Guards to remain in the City in case of a disturbance. The officer on guard had let this out, and a report, in consequence, reached the Foreign Office that the military had been called out, and this report was the reason of the walk to Lord Liverpool's. After Mr. Canning had given the above detail of the proceedings of the Cabinet, he said, 'If the Guards are called out, as I suppose they are, the crisis has arrived. If so, inquire at Lord Liverpool's, and go back and tell Mrs. Canning that it was not unforeseen by the Government, or she may be frightened.' This was said with the most perfect coolness, and any one who had seen him, on whom the major part of so deep a responsibility would have rested, might have thought he was talking on an indifferent subject. Having seen Lord Liverpool, he returned, and told me, that things were all going on well; therefore not to say a word to Mrs. Canning on the subject.

In the evening he came in late to dinner. He had been waiting at Lord Liverpool's to see the Governor of the Bank, to know how the day had passed. When he entered, he said significantly to Mr. Huskisson and myself, that 'all was well.' Afterwards, he added, 'gold is pouring in from all quarters.'

The above is taken from the memorandum. In the course of the Friday night the house of Rothschild had poured into the Bank 300,000*l.* Some of the gold, which was in the course of the day brought to the Bank, consisted of the identical coin *unpacked*, which

had been sent during the war as a subsidy to Russia, and the packing of which was recognised as their own by the Bank clerks. This is a curious fact, and is mentioned because it is curious; but it is, perhaps, not evident what is the moral to be deduced from it.

That this country has now a sound currency must be attributed to this decision of the Cabinet on the memorable night of December 26, 1825.

In consequence of this panic, soon after Parliament met, the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice of the following resolution, which he moved on the 10th of February:—

> That all notes under the value of five pounds, and stamped previously to the 5th of February, 1826, should be allowed to circulate till the 5th of February, 1829, and no longer.

Great efforts were made by the anti-freetraders to defeat this resolution. Mr. Canning thus describes to Lord Granville the state of things on the morning of the day on which the resolution was to be brought forward:—

> It is a critical day in the House of Commons; country bankers, and country gentlemen, and City merchants, are combined in one grand confederacy, against the withdrawal of the small notes, and they are to make a grand push to-day to overthrow the whole plan at its first introduction.
>
> Unluckily our friends are out of town in great numbers, not aware (any more than in truth our wise House of Commons people appear to have been) of the plan of hostile operations.
>
> *Nous verrons.* But of one thing we have satisfied our-

selves, that the *measure cannot* be abandoned, be the consequences of the struggle what they may.

When Mr. Canning wrote the last sentence, he had just received an affirmative answer to the question, which he thus puts to Lord Liverpool:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, Feb. 10, 1826.

My dear Liverpool,

From what I have heard from Lushington and from Huskisson, I am apprized of the critical nature of to-night's debate.

I presume you are quite determined to carry your measure, or to take the consequences. Let me know that I am right in this presumption; for, though it may not be necessary to say so in so many words, the perfect consciousness of the truth that such is the determination, *is* necessary to govern my language.

Ever sincerely yours,

Geo. Canning.

P.S.—Do you think that it would be right that I should prepare the King for our possible difficulties? His Majesty may otherwise be taken entirely by surprise.

G. C.

The division on the resolution was most unexpected, 222 for, to 39 against, the division being taken on the principle of the measure. Mr. Canning thus records his sentiments:—

(*Private.*)

Foreign Office, Feb. 11, 1826.

My dear Granville,

The result of last night cannot surprise you more, after my letter on Friday, than I am myself surprised at it, as compared with the reports made to me by our wise people of the House of Commons, on which that letter was founded.

So strong was their impression, and consequently mine, of the danger which we ran, that I wrote to the King on the

same day that I did to you, to prepare his Majesty for the possible result.

Happily the event has contradicted all the apprehensions which were entertained; though it by no means disproves the justness of them. There certainly was an attempt at combination, the success of which was as much magnified in the expectations of the conspirators, as it was in the fears of the Treasury; and till the division was near at hand, nobody ventured to calculate on so enormous a disparity of numbers.

The question may be considered as decided.

The conduct of the Opposition generally, and that of Brougham particularly, has been honourable and praiseworthy in the highest degree. I should not be sorry that it came round to Brougham that I so feel it.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

The Bill embodying the resolution was carried by large majorities in the Commons; but before it had passed that House, an announcement was made, by Lord Liverpool in the Lords, of an intention on the part of the Government to relax one of its provisions, by allowing the Bank of England to issue *1l.* notes, dated subsequently to the 5th of February, but not later than the 10th of October.

It appears by the following letter that Lord Liverpool had omitted to acquaint Mr. Canning with this intention; the latter thus remonstrates; the one single remonstrance that he ever addressed to Lord Liverpool, whilst they were colleagues in the Government:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, Feb. 20, 1826.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

It is so unpleasant to utter anything like the language of complaint, that I could not bring myself to say, when we met

yesterday (especially before others), one half of what I feel upon the fatal proceeding of Friday.

The *announcement* in the House of *Lords* of an *intended* alteration of a Bill in *progress* through the House of *Commons* is, on any occasion, a most unseemly step towards those who have the conduct of the business in the House of Commons, and is most affronting (as I know it has been felt to be) to the House of Commons itself.

But when the Bill is one which depends for its success upon the unusual combination of the leading members of Opposition with the Government against the friends of the Government (who are known to be most of them in their hearts against it), such an announcement is nothing less than an opportunity afforded to the Opposition to dissolve that combination, and therewith to defeat the Bill, retaining the credit of having been willing to support it.

I am much mistaken if we do not find these to be the tactics of Opposition to-day: and I am far from confident that they will not be successful. Lord Lansdowne's approbation, upon which you laid so much stress, has faded away. His language yesterday was that Government had made it *impossible for* the Opposition to continue their support; and that he now almost regretted that Tierney, instead of Baring, had not led the attack upon the Bill; in which case the measure would infallibly have miscarried.

The rise of the funds to-day is, in *my* mind, the reverse of a favourable symptom. It clearly shows that the relaxation is held to be a relaxation in *favour of the paper system.*

This inference may be corrected in argument; but the impression is made, and is indelible.

When Gurney proposed on Monday night a relaxation in favour of Bank of England notes, both Peel and I thought the matter so grave as to make it not undesirable to consider it in Cabinet, or at least in such a Cabinet as yesterday's. But it was thought better to drive on, and we divided against it. We opposed it again the next day.

I do not say that Gurney's proposition and that of Friday are identical; but they are so nearly allied, as to make the

discrimination between them matter of very nice reasoning. It was, therefore, surely most unwise to precipitate the disclosure of the change. It ought to have been introduced with all possible explanation; and, as the Committee of the Bill could not come on till to-day, and there would, therefore, have been the interval of Saturday and Sunday to concert such explanation, I cannot imagine why the naked fact of the change was sent forth to the world on Friday evening.

When Lushington mentioned to me *the notion of some* relaxation (I forget on what day, but I think Thursday), I presumed that we were to have an opportunity of considering it; and I had no objection to do so, though I felt the unfortunate embarrassment of our votes against Gurney. But I had not the slightest conception that the thing was *to be done*, still less that it was to be announced as done, and still less that it was to be announced in the *House of Lords*: and I confess I was thunderstruck when the report of that announcement reached me.

My apprehension is, that we shall not now carry the Bill; and, further, that we shall, now that we are thus discredited, be forced upon the proposal of the Exchequer bills.

The language and the tone which carried our majority on Tuesday will not do again. I am going down to the House. We will do the best that we can. But you must be prepared for the worst; and if that worst should come, I only trust that it will be remembered *what* a tone we were *encouraged*—nay *enjoined*—to take upon the one-pound-note measure; and that we shall not be expected to disgrace ourselves by *acting* in any other *tone* than that in which we have spoken. *I* am quite prepared for all consequences.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

Lord Liverpool acknowledged his omission, and the difficulty was got over without much trouble.

But yet another difficulty arose. The Bank wanted to force the Government to an issue of Exchequer bills on the security of goods; to this the Govern-

ment were opposed. Mr. Canning's views are detailed in the three following letters:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, Feb. 23, 1826.

My dear Liverpool,

I do not like to *bother* you with observations. But I cannot help imparting to you my fear that the arguments with which we were furnished on Sunday for the resistance of the issue of the proposed Exchequer bills, will not hold.

1st. As to the interest. It does *not* seem to be (as was stated on Sunday) a necessary consequence of the issue, that the outstanding Exchequer bills should be raised. Those of 1793, I see (upon reading the report) were issued at about 3 per cent., but bore a 5 per cent. interest to the borrower. It is the rate at which the *issue* was *made*, surely not that at which the bills lent were borrowed, that would govern the other bills in the markets.

The difference between the 3 and 5 per cent. paid the expense of the commission.

2ndly. It cannot be argued that there would be a month's delay before the good effect of the measure would be felt. The report expressly states, that the mere knowledge that relief might be had, operated a cure for the distress in one-sixth of the cases.

Nothing would be so prejudicial to us as the use of *answerable* arguments, and I therefore trust that those will not be employed.

I confess I do not see many remaining. The only one which satisfies my mind is not a stateable one; viz., the discredit of giving way after so long and sturdy a resistance. The only hope that I have of the success of a continued resistance is in the loan on goods by the Bank.

Without that, I think, we shall be beaten.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, Feb. 23, 1826.

My dear Liverpool,

You know I am not fond of interfering in matters out of my own department, unless when they appear to affect my own position and the character of your Government in the House of Commons.

But such a crisis exists at present, that I think I should be wanting in duty to you and to myself, as well as to the King, if I did not tell you frankly what I feel upon it.

Whether it would have been right or expedient to consent to an issue of Exchequer bills *originally*, I do not pretend to be a competent judge. My inclination was rather *for* it, but for no better reason than that it was the measure upon which the City seemed to have set their hearts; and which, therefore, might probably have restored confidence in a much greater proportion, perhaps, than it afforded relief.

But however that may be, the time is gone by; and if, after the repeated and solemn declarations of Government in both Houses of Parliament, the measure were to be adopted, it must be adopted, I think, by another Ministry.

There is, however, no necessity for it. The same confidence, and an infinitely more prompt and valuable relief may be afforded by the Bank, in the instant and judicious use of their undoubted power to lend goods.

This measure has all the advantages that the other could have had, without any of the difficulties in execution, or of the evil consequences, both immediate and remote, which would attend the issue of Exchequer bills by Government. What the Bank has the power to do, it is its duty to do in such an exigency as the present.

I think you ought to press this most strongly upon them, and if they refuse, I think it may be right that you should tell them, as my opinion and determination, that the whole case must be stated to the House of Commons, and a Committee (if proposed) granted to inquire into the causes of their refusal.

It has been my endeavour to deal as gently with the Bank

in all the late discussions as possible, notwithstanding the provocation of some very indiscreet speeches on the part of Mr. Pearse.

But I am not prepared to sit tamely by, and see the Government overthrown by the indiscretion, or obstinacy of any man, or any body of men. I will at least have a struggle for it in the House of Commons.

I have thought it right, on every ground, public and personal, to open my mind to you thus fully and unreservedly. I do assure you, no person living sees what I write, but you are at liberty to show it to whom you please.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private.*)

Foreign Office, Feb. 24, 1826.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I would propose to move something like the enclosed resolution, as an amendment to Mr. Wilson's motion for a Committee on Tuesday.

It would not be well to negative the Committee, and therewith the Exchequer bills (even if we could succeed in doing so, which I doubt), without pointing out and recording some other mode of relief.

The assertion that the Bank has such a power, is a truism which cannot be denied. And the mere assertion of the existence of such a power in the Bank, is sufficient to throw upon them the responsibility for exercising it.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

The next letter is written to Lord Liverpool on the night of the same day, after the debate:—

Foreign Office, Feb. 24, 1826.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I do not know that I ever heard in Parliament a more able speech than Huskisson's to-night, or one that made a deeper impression upon the House, or was likely to do more good to the country.

In the preceding debate Pearse was very saucy, and Manning very bitter; so I snubbed them both, and told them it was their duty to lend money.

From a few words that Pearse said in explanation, I almost hope that they will consider of it. But there can be no doubt that the Bank is absolutely *hostile*.

Good night.

Ever yours sincerely,

GEO. CANNING.

On the 6th of March Mr. Canning gives to Lord Granville a summary of the whole transaction:—

(*Private and* most *Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, March 6, 1826.

MY DEAR GRANVILLE,

I do not wonder at your having been startled at the notion of breaking up a Ministry upon the question of whether issuing Exchequer bills, to be cashed by the Bank, or issuing Bank notes at once, without the intervention of Exchequer bills, would best relieve the commercial distress of the moment? And such must have appeared to you to be the question on which our Ministerial existence was to be staked last Tuesday. But such was *not* precisely the question.

Liverpool—whether prudently or not, it is now not worth while, and it was last week, and, indeed, the week before last, much too late to inquire—had pledged himself in every way, by speech and writing, publicly and privately, to Parliament and to the Bank, to his colleagues and his circle of Treasury fellow-labourers, not to give way upon the Exchequer bills. His opinion was decidedly, *genuinely* against the issue, as useless for the present and dangerous for the future.

My opinion, perhaps from not understanding the matter so well, or from not rating anything of the sort so highly, was by no means so strong as his—indeed, was at first in the opposite direction.

But, as a question of department, it was for him to decide it; and it is but fair to add, that Huskisson entirely concurred with him; and, further, that Baring, in an interview which he

had with Liverpool, Robinson, and Huskisson, as one of a deputation to press for the issue of Exchequer bills, said to them, before he left L.'s room, after receiving a positive refusal, 'If I were in your place, and acted under your responsibility, I should do as you are doing.'

The contrast of this declaration with Baring's parliamentary conduct, is but one of several specimens of the like (consistency shall I say, or) honesty which he has exhibited in the course of the session. But that by the way. L. being thus pledged, and the Bank obstinate, and our wise people telling us that a *naked* refusal to issue Exchequer bills would infallibly turn the House of Commons against us, it occurred to L., as a way out of the difficulty, that he and Robinson should resign. He called upon me just before the House on Thursday (I think) the day on which the Bank declared in the House their resolution not to lend money on goods, to communicate this expedient. It was, of course, impossible for me to agree to it, or not to determine to defeat it. Thereupon it was that I went down to the House determined, if the Bank should make such a saucy declaration, to tell them and the House plainly, that they should not force the Government into an issue of Exchequer bills without forcing them out.

One person, I cannot deny, was hardly used in this transaction. I mean the King, who saw my speech in the newspapers with astonishment, not having been prepared, I am afraid, to consider the crisis as so serious. It was not *my* business to prepare his Majesty generally; and as to the particular occasion, I had no choice of time, for the Bank's sauciness *did* break out within an hour after I had received the communication of L.'s purpose of resigning, and nothing but the step which I did take would probably have prevented the extremity.

I have *since* explained this to the King, and I trust his Majesty will be satisfied.

To be sure it would have been a mighty foolish kind of death.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

On currency questions nothing more of importance occurred during the remainder of Mr. Canning's life.

The annexed letter on the subject of the Corn Laws is interesting:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Brighton, Aug. 24, 1826.

I sent to Huskisson, as I told you I would, the newspaper containing the speech imputed to him at Liverpool. I did not tell him with whom the observations made on that speech originated, but, of course, his surmises must rest between two or three.

I will not plague you with this matter during your excursion, but send this box, with orders to be delivered to you on your return to town.

In acknowledging Huskisson's letter to me, if you like, you will have an opportunity of saying (if you think fit), that you will bring the matter before the Cabinet.

It is high time, indeed, that we should come to a common understanding upon it. *I*, as you know, have no pledges and no prejudices upon it. But, whatever the Cabinet does decide, I must—with Huskisson—insist that it shall be recorded; and that it shall be an understood compact among the members of the Government, that their individual language out of doors shall conform to the decision of the majority, not of the minority, within.

In matters relating to my own department, the contrary practice has been inconvenient enough in former times; but now it does not signify. But in a question so vital as that of corn, an apparent discrepancy between the members of the Government (after a measure had been once agreed upon) would be disgraceful and ruinous.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

Mr. Canning's subsequent dealings with the Corn Laws are recorded in full in the *Political Life*.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROMAN-CATHOLIC QUESTION.

OF all the questions which agitated parties during Mr. Canning's life, none more materially affected his political destiny than the one called 'The Catholic Question.' It caused his retirement from office in 1801, when Mr. Pitt resigned; and it was his desire to procure an immediate consideration of it by the Cabinet, which prevented him from accepting the offer to join the Government, which was made to him directly after the assassination of Mr. Perceval. It was the opinion, conjointly entertained on this point by Lord Wellesley and himself, which caused the peremptory rejection of the overtures which they made to Lord Liverpool and his colleagues to take part in an Administration of which they were to have been the leaders. They were thus hindered from constructing a Ministry.

From the period of Mr. Pitt's resignation in 1801 till the time when George III.'s mental incapacity became evidently incurable, Mr. Canning adopted the view of Mr. Pitt, that it was not fitting that the King's mind should be disturbed by solicitations to make any further concessions to the Romanists. In this view of the case Mr. Fox had concurred; but when the feelings of the King became no longer in question, and the Regency was permanently esta-

blished, Mr. Canning began to take an active part in endeavouring to procure the removal of the disabilities. For this purpose he himself brought forward on the 22nd of June, 1812, a resolution, binding the House of Commons 'early in the next session of Parliament to take into their consideration the laws 'affecting the Roman Catholics, with a view to a 'final and conciliatory adjustment.' The resolution was carried by a majority of 129. At that period Napoleon was apparently more formidable than ever. He was on the eve of invading Russia. The dread of discontented millions in Ireland had doubtless a material influence on the vote. It was the largest majority in favour of the Romanists during Mr. Canning's life. Before another vote was taken, Napoleon's mighty host had perished.

It was in moving this resolution that Mr. Canning first publicly avowed his opinions in favour of the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities. In his speech are comprehensively collected all the general reasons for concession.

The arguments which he used on this, and on various other occasions, all fell under one or other of the two following heads:—

1. That 'rejoicing,' as he declared that he did, 'that we had separated from the Church of Rome, and 'that we had purified the doctrines and discipline of 'our own Church from Papal glosses and corruptions, 'still he did not see that there was sufficient in the 'creed of the Roman Catholics to justify us in denouncing that creed as incompatible with the discharge of their duties as good and faithful members 'of the state.' He therefore deemed their exclusion

from Parliament unjust, and consequently not to be persevered in.

2. 'Looking at the state of Ireland, and the disloyal discontent which prevailed there, coupled with the reiterated assurances from the Irish Roman Catholic body, that that discontent would cease if this point were conceded, he thought sound policy enjoined the trial of the experiment, even if the duty of concession on the ground of justice were put aside.

Under the first head, in his speech in 1825, Mr. Canning said:—

> One argument [against concession] is drawn from the acknowledgment by the Roman Catholics of the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. It cannot be denied that such spiritual supremacy is acknowledged; and the question for Parliament is, whether that doctrine is liable to be acted on in such a way as to threaten danger to the state.

He then goes on to cite the evidence of the Roman Catholic bishop Dr. Doyle, given before the Committees of the two Houses, to show that there was no danger:—

> Without giving [he said] to Dr. Doyle more credit than I would to any other moral, educated, and intelligent man, I am bound to conclude upon every calculation of probability, that he spoke nothing before the Committee but what he conscientiously believed to be true. It may then be taken to be true *that* the opinion, stated by Dr. Doyle to be the opinion of the Roman Catholics, is their opinion. Now Dr. Doyle solemnly denies that the spiritual obedience which Roman Catholics render to the Pope does, or can, interfere with their allegiance to their temporal Sovereign. His own words are, after a distinct disavowal of the contrary inference: 'There was an objection taken that the promise 'of obedience, though canonically made to the Pope, inter-

'fered with our allegiance to our lawful Sovereign, and there-
'fore there was a clause inserted in the oath which removed
'that objection.'

It appears from this extract that Mr. Canning attached great weight to the evidence of Dr. Doyle, who was a man of high character, and respected by all parties for his integrity and ability.

Dr. Doyle, however, gave other testimony of even more importance than that quoted. It was believed by some of the members of the Committee that a certain bull, called *Bulla Cœnâ Domini*, had been sent to Ireland by a former Pope, which bull if still in force there, excommunicated our Protestant King as a heretic, and absolved his subjects from their allegiance. It was evident that if this bull were in force there, Dr. Doyle could not have sworn truly that 'the spiritual obedience of Roman Catholics did 'not interfere with their allegiance to their temporal 'Sovereign.' Dr. Doyle was specially examined whether this bull was in force in Ireland. He replied—

It is not in force in Ireland, and never was: it has been rejected by nearly all the Italian countries of Europe; if it were in force, there is scarcely anything would be at rest among the Catholic states of Europe.

In reply to another question, the bishop answered—'It (the bull) never was in force with us, and surely never will be.' There is every reason to believe that this testimony was true: this bull, which, according to Dr. Doyle, was of so mischievous and fatal a character as that it 'would leave nothing at rest,' not amongst the Protestant, but 'amongst the Catholic states of Europe,' was not then in force in

Ireland, and since, according to the same authority, it '*never* had been,' there were good grounds for accepting his assurance '*that* it *never would be*.'

Such was the kind of evidence which led statesmen to the belief that the creed of the Roman Catholic subjects of the British Crown was not such as 'justified us in denouncing it as incompatible with the 'discharge of their duties,' as good and faithful members of the state.'*

In 1813, when the first bill was brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Grattan (the best and greatest of Irish patriots), Mr. Canning took an active part in introducing into it what he considered would afford ample security to the throne of a Protestant Sovereign, and for the maintenance of the Established Church. For concession of political power to the Roman Catholics was advocated by both on the special plea which was thus incorporated into the preamble of the bill:—

> Whereas the United Protestant Church of England and Ireland is established *permanently* and *inviolably*, it would tend to promote the interests of the same, and to strengthen the free constitution, of which the said United Church forms an essential part, to admit the Roman Catholic subjects of his Majesty into a full participation of civil privileges.

The two points in the way of security to which Mr. Canning specially directed his attention were, (1) The regulation of the correspondence between the See of Rome and the Romanists: (for in those 'days there was a law in this country which made

---

* Three years after the Relief Bill was passed, this bull was put in force in Ireland by the Papal Hierarchy.

'the receiving of bulls and other instruments from 'Rome high treason; yet bulls and instruments were 'continually received without any notice being taken.') (2) To secure the appointment of such men, as bishops, who were known to be loyally and peaceably disposed.

For the first of these ends it was proposed to abolish the legal penalty which then attached to the correspondence, and to 'constitute a commission, remov-'able at pleasure, composed of Roman Catholic peers, 'bishops and commoners, and Protestant privy coun-'cillors, with whom, in England, a Secretary of State, 'and, in Ireland, the Chief Secretary, were to be asso-'ciated,' to whom whatever instruments came from Rome were to be disclosed, under pain of banishment beyond the seas to the party receiving them.

For the second—this same commission were to be bound to testify that 'the persons who were chosen '(*no matter by whom*) to be made bishops, were 'peaceful and well-disposed subjects,'* before they would be allowed to enter into the discharge of their episcopal functions within the King's dominions.

The words '*no matter by whom*,' are important; for they mark the principle on which Mr. Canning framed his 'securities'—viz. that the recognition of a Roman Catholic bishop does not involve the recognition, as lawful, of the spiritual supremacy of his chooser. For, since it is not the *nominating* but the *consecrating* authority, which creates a bishop, the *only* way in which a bishop can be made is by the act of other bishops. Thus, the British Sovereign may

* Canning's *Speeches*, vol. iii. p. 413.

nominate a man to a bishopric; but, if all other bishops refuse to consecrate him, no independent act which the Sovereign can perform can invest him with the episcopal character. On the other hand, bishops (as in the Scotch Episcopal Church) can be made without being nominated by their Sovereign or the Pope. It is, therefore, '*no matter by whom*' a bishop is 'chosen.'

The laws of England as well as the Church of England admit the validity of the consecration of Roman Catholic bishops; but they take no cognizance of their nominator; nor could they do so without recognising his spiritual supremacy, as rightful over the Roman Catholic subjects of the realm. Such recognition would be a violation of the fundamental principle of the Protestant faith; because all true Protestants must deny that the Pope (although he may be head of the Roman Church) has any inherent *rightful* spiritual jurisdiction over the subjects of other states. It is true that a Roman Catholic subject of the Queen now may, if he like, without breaking any law, acknowledge, publicly or privately, that spiritual jurisdiction; but the mere acknowledgment by one man of the jurisdiction or supremacy of another cannot erect that supremacy into a right. Joe Smith may claim a spiritual supremacy over a Mormon, and the Mormon may acknowledge and submit to the claim; but a relation, founded on false pretensions on the one side and weak credulity on the other, can never become a right, which is binding.

If, then, the spiritual claims of the Pope *over the Romanist subjects* of the British Crown, be acknow-

ledged by Protestants as rightful, it must be on other and far deeper grounds than the assertion of those claims by the one party, and their acknowledgment by the other. What those grounds are is well known. If true, they are irresistible; but then they are equally binding on *all* Christians. The Pope founds his claims to universal spiritual allegiance on his being 'Christ's vicar or representative on earth.' He claims to derive his authority from St. Peter, which authority, he asserts, St. Peter derived from Christ. He claims to be alone of all the bishops in the world who has 'the power of the keys;' for that, in heaven, as well as on earth, he can 'unloose and bind.' If, then, his claims be just, and *not* false and blasphemous pretensions, Protestants have nothing else to do but to bow the knee in humble adoration, together with their Roman Catholic brethren, who bow their knees solely and exclusively because they believe these pretensions to be true. But it is of the very essence of the Protestant creed to condemn these pretensions as false. On no other plea could our ancestors have justly withdrawn their country from under the authority of the Pope; on no other ground can their descendants continue to deny the Papal supremacy. All Roman Catholics admit that, if the Pope be not what he claims to be, he has no rightful spiritual supremacy over them; so that Protestants cannot acknowledge that supremacy over their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects as *rightful*, unless they, at the same time, acknowledge the Pope to be truly 'Christ's vicar on earth,' in which case, they themselves owe allegiance to him.

When the Popish bishops entreated Queen Eliza-

beth, shortly after her accession, to call to mind the *covenants* between her sister Mary and the Holy See, wherein she promised to depress heresy, binding herself, her successors, and her kingdom, under pain of perpetual ignominy and a curse; the Queen made answer, that it lay not in her sister's power to bind her and her realms to an *usurped* authority; and that she would esteem, as enemies to God and to her, *all* her subjects, who should own the usurped authority of the Bishop of Rome.

Mr. Canning knew that the existence of Roman Catholic bishops, and of a correspondence between Roman Catholics and the See of Rome, were facts which could not be denied. He therefore deemed it necessary that the state should deal with them. In dealing with them, he scrupulously guarded against doing any act whereby the state should recognise, as rightful, the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, or should admit any virtue or validity in the correspondence carried on by him with the subjects of the British Crown. His proposition, therefore, was, that no person should exercise episcopal functions within the realm, unless certified by competent authority to be a 'peaceful and well-disposed subject;' and that no bulls, dispensations, or other instruments from Rome, should be permitted to come into this country without disclosure to the same authority, whereby would be ascertained that their contents did not infringe upon the law. He held that the state ought to do all this in its own unaided strength and in the majesty of its own power. He held that there ought to be no negotiation, no concordat with the Pope, no seeking by the Sovereign to bolster up his autho-

rity by calling in foreign aid to assist in governing his own subjects.

If the emancipation were granted upon these principles, Mr. Canning believed that it would have the happiest effect in tranquillizing Irish discontent:—

> Ireland [he said] now sits in the Representative Assembly of the empire, and, when she is allowed to come there, why is she not allowed to elect members for it from her Roman Catholic children? For three centuries we have been erecting mounds, not to assist or to improve, but to thwart nature: we have raised them high above the waters, and they have stood for many a year frowning proud defiance upon all who attempted to cross them; but in the course of ages even they have been nearly broken down, and the narrow isthmus which they now form stands between two kindred seas; the fountains see each other, and would fain meet. Shall we fortify the mounds which are now almost in ruins, or shall we leave them to moulder away by time or accident? an event which, though distant, must happen, and which, when it does, will only confer a thankless favour; or shall we at once break down the isthmus which remains, and float upon the mingling wave the ark of our common Constitution?

Thus did he urge relief in time, before it became 'a thankless favour,' lest the crisis should come when the State would have to yield to fear what it denied to justice.

From the period when Lord Castlereagh entered the Cabinet in 1812, the Roman Catholic question was what is called an 'open' one. When Mr. Canning joined the Government after his return from Lisbon, it was on that footing; and it was on the same footing that he re-entered the Cabinet in 1822 after Lord Castlereagh's death. Nevertheless, this open question was a serious stumbling-block between the liberal and the high Tory Ministers. Of these

last the Duke of Wellington and the Lord Chancellor Eldon were the most influential; for Lord Liverpool and Mr. Peel were high Tories on this point only, and supported Mr. Canning on all other questions. Lord Liverpool was the key-stone of the arch which kept the arch from falling. He was looked up to by both sides with that entire confidence to which his perfect integrity, and his great ability so justly entitled him. He had early made up his mind upon this question, and he preserved his consistency upon it till his death.

The consequence of Mr. Peel having arrived at a similar conclusion was, that, in the very early stages of his political career he attained a position of public importance unusual for so young a man. He became, at once, the head in the House of Commons of the anti-Popish party, then the most numerous and powerful party in the country. Had he taken the other side, there were many who were before him in the race; but by espousing the cause which he did, he was *facile princeps*.

The effect of this state of things manifested itself in the representation of Oxford University. Mr. Canning and Mr. Peel were both members of the same college (Christ Church);

To represent the university in which I was educated formed [said the former] the first visions of my youthful ambition. Before that object all others vanished into comparative insignificance. It was desirable to me, beyond all the blandishments of power, beyond all the rewards and favours of the Crown. I had a fair chance of accomplishing this object when the Catholic question crossed my way. I was warned, fairly and kindly warned, that the adoption of that cause would blast my pro-

spect: I adhered to it, and forfeited all my long-cherished hopes and expectations.

Mr. Peel accordingly on this sole ground supplanted Mr. Canning. The position and length of public service of the latter would have given him, at any rate, the priority in the representation. So marked an influence had the adoption of these opinions by Mr. Peel in raising him early and rapidly into political importance.

The Relief Bill which, in 1825, Sir Francis Burdett brought in, was carried through the Commons by majorities of 27 and 21. Before it was sent up to the Lords, proceedings took place in the Commons, which notified to their lordships that the Commons were willing both to raise the qualification for the election franchise in Ireland, and to make a provision for the Roman Catholic priesthood. These measures were *both* then proposed in order to *conciliate* the opponents of emancipation! The former bill did 'not trench upon *existing* privileges;' it only prevented the future manufacture of forty-shilling freeholders, which had been carried on to an extent in Ireland, for electioneering purposes, quite incompatible with the sound principles of the Constitution. The latter was a measure which its proposers and approvers thought would bind the Popish priesthood by a 'golden chain' to their Protestant Sovereign. To this attempt Mr. Canning was simply '*not opposed.*' It was not that he approved it, much less recommended it. The utmost that he said was, that since it had been projected by Mr. Pitt he had a 'favourable impression respecting it;' but he deemed it right to qualify this limited

declaration by saying that *that* impression was subject to be modified 'by more perfect information' than he then possessed; and that he only disclosed it then 'because many gentlemen had stated that on the 'carrying of that measure, and another with reference 'to the forty-shilling freeholders, would depend their 'support to the Emancipation Bill.'*

Before the second reading of Sir F. Burdett's bill in the Lords, the Duke of York, then the next heir to the throne, declared himself in the strongest terms against the concession, avowing his determination to oppose it 'to the latest moment of his existence, 'whatever might be his situation in life.' H.R.H. ratified his declaration by an oath—'So help me God!'

This speech produced a great sensation throughout the country; it was printed in letters of gold; and I remember when a copy so printed was given to Mr. Canning, he pointed to it with a sorrowful air, saying, 'This is a sign of the times which augurs ill for future peace.'

The bill was rejected in the House of Lords by a majority of 48. The Premier made a speech which, to the Leader of the House of Commons, was unexpectedly strong. From that time the latter resolved that the question should be no longer a forbidden

---

* 'Wynn reports Mr. Canning to have told Tierney,' on the measures of disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders, and paying the Popish clergy, 'that he had never been consulted upon them, and 'he hoped these gentlemen were aware of what they had under-'taken, and of the difficulties in which they were likely to involve 'themselves and the question of Catholic emancipation.'—*Duke of Buckingham's Memoirs of the Court of George IV.*, vol. ii. p. 238.

one with his colleagues, and he at once settled with them that he should be 'at liberty for the future to 'propound it for discussion in the Cabinet, as any 'other question of national interest.'

Mr. Canning took the same step with the King. After the prorogation in the autumn of 1825, having written to Mr. Plunket the following letter, he sent a copy to his Majesty. These two letters explain the exact position of the question at that period:—

(Confidential.)

MY DEAR SIR, F. O., Sept. 25, 1825.

Had the decision, whether to dissolve Parliament this year or not, turned upon the convenience and advantage of the Government alone, it must have been in the affirmative.

The unexampled prosperity of this country, the unexampled tranquillity of Ireland, and the good humour of both, constitute a state of affairs, which, at the end of a sixth session of Parliament, it was a great forbearance on the part of the King's Ministers to suffer to pass by.

True, these favourable symptoms may continue or even increase; but who shall undertake that a cloud no bigger than a man's hand may not swell into a tempest before the expiration of a twelvemonth?

I do not indeed see many such specks in the horizon: but there never was yet a political sky without some of them, and some there are at present, as in all former times.

I should feel therefore very doubtful if I had not concurred in a decision unfair to the Government, and therein to the country (which I may be allowed in writing to you to say that I consider as interested in the welfare and popularity of the Government), if I had not been satisfied that, amidst all the calm apparently diffused over this part of the United Kingdom, there lay hidden—but ready to break out upon excitement—a furious zeal against the Catholic question.

I have received information within the last few weeks

which leaves no doubt upon my mind that the fact is as here stated. In the north of England there are no strong indications of it; but in the midland counties and in the western and southern, the anti-Catholic cry is only kept down (and not kept down in some places) until the proclamation for a new Parliament should give the signal for raising it. Once raised in half a dozen counties or populous towns, there is no saying how wide and how rapidly it would have spread.

It is but justice to those of my colleagues who differ from me upon the Catholic question, but first and principally to Lord Liverpool, to declare that he deprecated, as earnestly as I could do, the raising of such a cry. This consideration mainly—I might say with truth, almost *solely*—decided our opinions on the question of dissolution in the negative.

But it is plain that little will have been gained in this respect by deferring the dissolution till next year, when it necessarily *must* take place (beyond the divesting ourselves of the responsibility of creating the occasion for the cry), if the interval is to be employed by the Roman Catholics and their friends in a manner tending to keep alive the disposition to excitement. Nay, in some respects, the danger will be increased by the postponement; as the dissolution then being foreseen and inevitable, the anti-Catholic feeling will be better prepared to burst forth in all quarters at once.

But, on the other hand, if that interval shall be an interval of tranquillity and abeyance as to the Roman Catholic question, I have little hesitation in declaring my opinion that the postponement of the election of the new Parliament, in whose hands the determination of that question (for our time at least) is to rest, will be of the greatest benefit to it.

It is therefore my clear and entire conviction that, if the Roman Catholic leaders on your side of the water are true to the Roman Catholic cause, they will use their utmost efforts to prevent, instead of to provoke, the agitation of the Roman Catholic question in the next session.

Consider what *could* be gained, and what *would* be risked

by bringing it forward in the House of Commons the last session of the Parliament.

The sentiments of *this* House of Commons in favour of concession to the Roman Catholics are upon record. Thrice have they sent up to the other House of Parliament a bill granting concession more or less ample (for I include my Roman Catholic Peers' Bill in the number). Would a fourth enunciation of the same principle add anything to the authority of the preceding decisions? Would not a failure, on a fourth trial, do that authority away?

'But we'll not fail,' some of your vehement orators may answer. I beg them not to be too sure of that. I speak not conjecturally, but with perfect certainty, when I aver that *I know* of *as many* warm and sincere friends of the Roman Catholic cause who would withhold their support from a motion brought forward the next session, and who, if such a motion were pressed vexatiously and pertinaciously, would turn against it, *as* would fearfully reduce the slender majority of the last session. The persons to whom I refer are of such weight and character, so unquestionable as to their sincerity, and so unassailable as to their motives, that their example would afford cloak and colour to numerous other desertions, originating perhaps as much in lukewarmness as in timidity.

For you must not deceive yourselves (I dare say, indeed, *you* do *not* deceive yourself) so far as to suppose that every man who votes with us on this question is therefore an enthusiast in its favour, and ready to suffer for it the martyrdom of loss of seat, or of an expensive contest.

So much for the House of Commons. But as to the House of Lords the case is not less clear.

No man can suppose that the House of Lords *could* yield to the mere repetition of a vote three times rejected by them of the *same* House of Commons. To *force* the House of Lords to a fourth rejection would be only to widen the breach between the two Houses, and to give to the dissolution of Parliament next year that very appearance of an appeal to

the people, which the postponement of it this year is intended to avoid.

If in the first session of a *new* House of Commons the vote of the last House of Commons shall be affirmed, I do not say that the House of Lords *will* yield, but I say they *may*. It will be in that case a *new question;* and such an expression of opinion by a House of Commons, fresh from the people, would *enable* the House of Lords to reconsider their former votes *without dishonour*.

But to afford the chance of such an impression on the House of Lords, by affording the best chance of the election of such a House of Commons, a quiet session (in respect to this great question) is absolutely, indispensably necessary.

It is most to be wished that the Catholics themselves may acknowledge and act upon this necessity. But if they should fail to do so, it will then be the duty (in my mind) as much as the policy (for the sake of the question itself) of those who take part in favour of the Roman Catholic question to resist any attempt to agitate it next year in the House of Commons.

So strongly do I feel this persuasion, that I am determined, if unhappily the question should be forced on, to meet it myself with the previous question.

I am aware to what misconstructions this proceeding may possibly expose me. I need hardly say that I had much rather that this extreme measure was averted by the discretion of those of the Catholic body with whom the bringing the question forward may rest. But as one cannot leave such a matter to chance, and as one must be prepared for *possible* extremities, this is the resolution which (contingently and not without hope that I may be spared the pain of acting upon it) I have formed, and I have thought it matter of obligation as well as of friendship to lose no time in making you acquainted with it.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Sincerely and faithfully yours,

GEO. CANNING.

The Right Hon. W. C. Plunket.

P.S.—I write in great haste, amidst many pressing calls of public business; but I would not defer writing in expectation of a moment of leisure, which may not come; and what I write, however hastily written, is the result of long and most anxious deliberation.

Yours, GEO. CANNING.

The following letter is the one which Mr. Canning wrote to the King, when he enclosed his letter to Mr. Plunket:—

Foreign Office, Oct. 19, 1825.

Mr. Canning, in submitting with his humble duty the accompanying copy of a letter for your Majesty's gracious perusal, humbly entreats your Majesty to believe that he does not presume to entertain the slightest wish or expectation that your Majesty should condescend to express any opinion upon the subject to which it relates.

But in the very embarrassing situation in which that subject is placed (by no fault of any one, but through its own intrinsic difficulties), Mr. Canning is, above all things, anxious that your Majesty should be informed (if your Majesty will deign to receive such information) of any step taken by Mr. Canning, *individually*, upon a question upon which your Majesty's confidential servants do not offer to your Majesty any *collective* opinion.

The letter to Mr. Plunket was shown to Lord Liverpool before it was sent to its destination.

Mr. Canning has always intended humbly to lay it before your Majesty, but he has deferred doing so till now, partly because he has had of late to trouble your Majesty with so many voluminous official papers, and partly because he wished to be enabled, at the time of laying the letter before your Majesty, to state to your Majesty that not only Mr. Plunket, but Lord Wellesley, concurred in its contents, and would co-operate with Mr. Canning for the attainment of its object.

Mr. Canning has now received from both the strongest assurances of such concurrence and co-operation.

For himself Mr. Canning begs leave most humbly to assure your Majesty, that however impossible it would be for Mr. Canning at any time to pursue, consistently with his honour and conscientious conviction, any other course than that which he has hitherto pursued upon this most momentous and perplexing question, sentiments of affectionate duty and grateful attachment to your Majesty make him feel at all times no less the wish than the obligation to consult to the utmost of his power, in the discussions which may arise upon this question, your Majesty's ease and comfort, and to omit no endeavour by which the decision upon it (whatever that decision may be) can be rendered least prejudicial to the general well-being of your Majesty's Government.

Mr. Canning thus describes to Lord Granville the King's reception of this communication:—

I have taken the opportunity of this comparatively quiet time to make another communication to the King, the policy of making which you or almost any one else would, perhaps, have thought doubtful—and so it was; I, therefore, acted, as in such cases it is right to do, on my own opinion, without comparing it with any other, and I have no reason to regret having done so.

I sent to his Majesty for his private perusal a copy of my letter to Mr. Plunket.

He has returned it with thanks, describes it as 'admirable;' and though he does not (nor could I expect that he would) look beyond the next year for what must follow, there is not one word in his letter of determination not to yield, not a syllable of his royal brother's language, and not a shadow of ill-humour. This is well so far as it goes, and it is a great thing to have begun with his Majesty upon a subject which hitherto has been considered as interdicted ground.

You remember, of course, that in the discussions (in Cabinet) which followed the loss of the question last session, I declared my determination to be no longer precluded from communicating with his Majesty when I thought fit.

During the session of 1826 the question was not agitated in Parliament.

When the new Parliament met in 1827, the advocates of the removal of restrictions resumed their activity. Mr. Canning was at that time confined to his room at Brighton; but the following correspondence shows the view which he took of the state of the question at that moment:—

DEAR LORD CARLISLE, Brighton, Feb. 15, 1827.

Mr. Canning, as you of course are aware, has been very seriously indisposed for the last three weeks, first with inflammation of the external muscles of the back which threatened to strike inwards and attack the lungs, but which was subdued by bleeding; and latterly with an intermittent rheumatic ague in the head and face, which, though not a dangerous, is still a most painful complaint, and has incapacitated him almost wholly from attending to business.

Yesterday and to-day, however, the pain has been gradually subsiding, and he has been talking with me to-day, as well on *official* business as on topics of interest of a more general nature.

Some days ago Sir F. Burdett communicated with Mr. Huskisson his intention of bringing forward the Roman Catholic question by a resolution, instead of by, in the first instance, bringing in a bill. Nothing could more entirely concur with Mr. Canning's opinion as to what was most expedient, than this mode of proceeding in the House of Commons, where the decision may be presumed to be generally favourable, and where it is of immense importance that the first vote of the new Parliament should be as large as possible, and where, therefore, it is very desirable to avoid, in the first instance, the details of a bill, for which the half-shabby and the half-converts might find excuses for not voting. A resolution, too, pledges the House of Commons for its existence, which a bill, if afterwards lost in the House of Lords, might not do.

But these very reasons, which are so conclusive in favour of Sir F. Burdett's mode of proceeding in the House of Commons, appear to Mr. Canning to operate directly against a similar course in the House of Lords.

He is not without his hopes that there may be some growing facilities in that House. But, he thinks that it would be trying their lordships far too highly, and far too early, to attempt to get a vote favourable to the principle of the question, within two months after one of the events which will have been vulgarly supposed to have softened the prejudices of some of the most bigoted anti-Catholics.

He thinks he knows persons, who perhaps three months hence might be glad to look at the Roman Catholic question as a new question; but would feel it a point of honour not to appear to have forgotten on the 8th of March the event* of the 5th of January.

Again, though a resolution is desirable in the House of Commons, as carrying a pledge throughout the whole of the Parliament, it is for that very reason not the most advisable course in the House of Lords, where the decision is likely to be the other way.

Supposing the resolution carried triumphantly in the House of Commons, a bill founded on that resolution might be brought in immediately after Easter, and carried up to the Lords.

Supposing the House of Lords to reject that bill, as heretofore, still they reject *that* only bill. But if they negative a resolution, they abjure the principle of all such bills, and the two Houses are then more completely than ever pitted against each other. What the result in process of time of such a struggle would be, it is not perhaps very difficult to imagine. But the struggle itself is a monstrous evil, and an inevitable delay. Whereas if there be any chance of the House of Lords yielding this year, it would assuredly facilitate their doing so, to give them a bill to nibble at, which they may alter and amend so as to retract with honour, and to have some share in the measure, if carried into a law. By pro-

* Death of the Duke of York.

pounding a plump resolution directly contrary to all their former decisions, are they not called upon to eat their words in a manner somewhat too peremptory?

This is the substance (indeed almost the very words) of a long conversation which I have had with him this morning, upon my reading to him in the newspapers Lord Lansdowne's notice. He seems so greatly alarmed at the mischief that may arise from it, that I have ventured, out of my own head, to put you in possession of his opinion.

I shall take an opportunity of telling him that I have done so, but I am sure that he will not object to my having done it to you.

Believe me,
Very truly yours,
A. G. STAPLETON.

Grosvenor Place, Feb. 17, 1827.

DEAR STAPLETON,

I was glad to find, by your letter which I received this morning, that Canning's amendment was progressing, and that he was able to converse upon business.

I hope, however, that he will not over-fatigue himself.

I was much struck with the observations you have communicated respecting the mode of proceeding in the House of Lords, and had imagined that Canning had been informed of Lord Lansdowne's intention.

I endeavoured to see him this morning, but could not find him at home. I have, however, sent to him in writing the substance of your remarks, not quoting you, but as the result of a friend's conversation with Canning. The point is so material, and so much depends upon adopting the right mode and the right time, that I had no scruple, without having Canning's direct authority, in mentioning his opinion. I am going to Lord Stafford's on Monday, and shall probably, in that interval, hear from Lord Lansdowne.

Believe me,
Ever truly yours,
CARLISLE.

Five o'clock.

I have just seen Lord Lansdowne. He assures me that the mode of proceeding is still open, and was so intended to remain till Canning's opinion could be ascertained. But he gave the notice to satisfy people in Ireland, that some proceeding should take place in the Lords in the course of the session; that an early notice was judged necessary, but that the mode of proceeding, either by resolution or bill, is left undetermined; that personally he is, of course, very anxious to have Canning's concurrence.

The communicating the Commons' resolution to the Lords would necessitate a question there; but there is no notice given to that effect, and no pledge given for adopting that course. C.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

DEAR LORD CARLISLE, Brighton, Feb. 18, 1827.

I yesterday made known to Mr. Canning the step which I had taken in communicating to you the substance of his conversation with me on the Roman Catholic question, and he was pleased highly to approve of my having so done. The letter which I have received from you to-day you may be sure only served to make him *more pleased* with my measure than he was before. He desires me to say that he shall have great pleasure in talking with you further on the subject, when he comes to town.

He intends to return to town on Saturday. I am happy to say that his health has not suffered from the agitation arising from the melancholy and astounding event of poor Lord Liverpool's seizure, the news of which reached him late last night. It, of course, *bouleversés* all his calculations; but as Lord L. *may* recover, however improbable it may be, things will at present go on in the course already chalked out. The Corn question will certainly be brought on in the House of Lords on the 26th by some other peer.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

A. G. STAPLETON.

DEAR STAPLETON, Grosvenor Place, Feb. 21, 1827.

I have just seen Lord Lansdowne. He has had a conversation with Sir F. Burdett, who is anxious to take whatever course is judged most expedient in bringing on the Catholic question.

Canning is, I believe, informed, that he would postpone it from the 1st to the 5th; but on account of the circuit, it could not be postponed longer, if it is intended to come on before Easter. The general opinion of its supporters has been hitherto against delaying it till after Easter, subject, however, to Canning's view of the subject. It is, therefore, much wished that upon his coming to town he would communicate, through some channel, his opinion either in favour or against delay.

I trust the accounts in the papers are correct, and that his health improves daily.

Believe me, ever truly yours,

CARLISLE.

DEAR LORD CARLISLE, Brighton, Feb. 22, 1827.

I have received your letter of yesterday, and have shown it to Mr. Canning, who desires me to thank you for the information which it contains.

Mr. Canning was aware that Sir F. Burdett was willing to postpone his motion from the 1st to the 5th of March; but as he has no doubt of being able to bring forward the Corn question, he has no wish to have the Roman Catholic question postponed; on the contrary, he would *prefer* its coming on on the day now settled, the interval of two or three days being quite sufficient to rest him.

With regard to its being postponed till after Easter, he agrees with what, you say, is the general opinion of its supporters, that it is most advantageous to the success of the question not to have it postponed.

Mr. Canning desires me to say, with his kind regards to you, that the accounts of his health in the papers are quite correct, and that he is rapidly improving.

Very truly yours,

A. G. STAPLETON.

A bill brought in by Sir F. Burdett was lost on the 1st of March (1827), in the Commons by the very narrow majority of 4. This was the last time that Mr. Canning voted on any substantive measure on this question. The discussions respecting it which subsequently occurred belong to the formation of the Administration of which he was the First Minister.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES BECOMES QUEEN CONSORT—HER RETURN TO ENGLAND IN 1820—PROCEEDINGS CONSEQUENT ON THAT EVENT.

THE death of George III., which took place on the 29th of January, 1820, raised the Princess of Wales to the rank of Queen Consort. Thence arose that series of disastrous complications which tried the stability of all the institutions of the State. Nearly forty years have now elapsed since the events occurred which marked this singular epoch of our history.

In the month of June preceding the death of George III. some communications passed between the Princess's chief law adviser (Mr. Brougham) and the Cabinet, in order to bring about some arrangement, which should hold good in the event of H.R.H. becoming Queen. In the month of August following, Mr. Brougham received a letter from his Royal client (or, as he called her, 'the lady in question'), expressing 'her resolve to come over herself,' and saying that 'she had written to Lord Liverpool to tell him so.'

I had heard [writes Mr. Brougham]* of this letter a fortnight ago, but did not listen much to it, thinking she had writ-

* August 5, 1819.

ten it as a demonstration; but I am confident from her letter of to-day that she now intends to come, and I am still more clear that her coming would be pregnant with every sort of mischief (not to mention the infernal personal annoyance of having such a d—l to plague me for six months). I think it exposes things to the risk of clamour and violence, which no one can hope to estimate, far less to direct, or, in case of necessity, disarm. In short, the question, both before being brought on, and after, would not be considered with even tolerable coolness and fairness, were she here. I therefore am disposed to prevent her coming by every means in my power. I have written instantly, but I shall set out suddenly myself to stop her, if I find that nothing else will do; even if she had begun her journey, I had rather meet her on the road and make her turn—in short, anything better than her coming here.

You had better communicate this. I rely on the honour of the party principally concerned to have justice done to my motives in the event of the other setting the mob against me, which she is quite capable of doing.

Her letters, at present, are most confidential and submissive towards me.

Such were the sentiments of the Princess's law adviser some six months before she became Queen. No doubt they were the expression of his real opinions. These opinions are referred to in the following document, in reply to the matters concerning the Queen communicated by his Majesty to his servants for their opinion and advice, immediately after his accession:—

Feb. 10, 1820.

In laying before your Majesty the result of their deliberations upon the most delicate and most distressing subject, upon which they have ever been called upon to tender their advice, your Majesty's confidential servants most humbly entreat your Majesty to believe that they entered upon those deliberations with the deepest sense of what is due to your

Majesty's personal feelings, no less than to the honour of your crown, and to the welfare of your kingdom.

Their opinions have been formed with a view to all these considerations.

And they beg leave individually, as well as collectively, to assure your Majesty that they have examined every part and bearing of this afflicting and perplexing case, and have weighed every sentence of their minute with that scrupulous solicitude, which was alike demanded by the magnitude of the question referred to them, and by the sincere and affectionate attachment which they bear to the person of your Majesty.

As often as the conduct of the Princess of Wales was brought under the consideration of your Majesty's confidential servants before the death of his late Majesty, there naturally occurred, as a part of that consideration, the question, whether it was not, upon the whole, most expedient to abstain from any public proceeding whatever.

Such proceeding, in any shape, would in that case have been a voluntary act; and it might, therefore, have been reasonably doubted, whether it was advisable to incur the hazard of those public evils which might probably arise out of it.

The question is now materially changed, in consequence of the accession of your Majesty.

Some alteration in the Liturgy has become indispensably necessary.

The provision granted to the Princess of Wales in 1814, has expired, and it may be assumed that some proceeding must take place in Parliament for settling her situation.

Proceedings relative to H.R.H., both on the part of the Crown in the exercise of its prerogative, and on the part of Parliament, are now not matters of choice, but of necessity.

Your Majesty's confidential servants have most seriously and attentively considered the papers which have been laid before them respecting the conduct of the Princess of Wales,

together with the opinions of the law officers of the Crown, and of those of the Duchy of Cornwall; and with the former Minutes of Cabinet, which have been submitted to your Majesty on this subject.

It appears, by the opinions to which they have referred, that there are difficulties in point of law in this case, which may be considered decisive as to any proceedings against the Princess of Wales for high treason.

They think it material to advert, in the first instance, to the effect of this opinion; for though a prosecution of the Princess for high treason would, in the judgment of some, be subject to insurmountable objections, independent of the special difficulties of the case and of those which always attend the legal proof of this particular crime; yet on the other hand, assuming the evidence collected to be sufficient, there would have been this advantage, incident to a proceeding for high treason, that the case would have rested on a single fact to be tried by due course of law, that the sole question would have been, whether the fact itself was proved, or could be controverted; that the accused would have had no right to recriminate, or to justify her conduct, by any circumstances not immediately connected with the fact itself.

A proceeding for high treason being thus out of the question, there remain only the following courses to be adopted.

That of divorce by Act of Parliament, or that of separation, under different modifications, by the same authority.

Upon the measure of divorce, the following observations are most humbly submitted:—

1. It is the established practice of Parliament, not to entertain a bill of divorce, without the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Court being before them, and without a record of a verdict of damages in a court of common law, in all cases where it can be obtained. Divorce bills rest, therefore, upon some previous judicial decision.

A verdict of damages, from the nature of the present case could not be contemplated; and any attempt to institute pro-

ceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court has, for many reasons, been pronounced highly inexpedient.

To introduce into Parliament a measure of this importance, in a mode so entirely unusual, without any previous judicial decision, would be an undertaking of no light moment; and there are persons who entertain doubts, arising from religious scruples, whether any divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* would be valid, unless supported by the authority of some ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Whatever may be the value of such doubts, the very existence of them is not to be overlooked.

2. It is further submitted, that any private individual, circumstanced in his domestic relations as your Majesty has been with respect to the Princess, as to separation, correspondence, and other particulars, could not expect to obtain a divorce, according to the established usage of Parliament, in bills of this nature.

It is undoubtedly true that the station of the Sovereign constitutes a material difference between his case and that of a private individual. But it results from this very difference,—that while the comments to which an application from an individual under such circumstances would be liable, could only affect himself,—in the case of a Sovereign, they might produce consequences highly injurious to the most essential public interests.

3. It is still doubted, whether the evidence which has been collected in this case could be completely relied on as sufficient to prove the crime of adultery before Parliament, or any other tribunal.

This evidence would indeed establish the fact, if not rebutted or discredited; but, notwithstanding the supplementary evidence, that which has since been obtained, your servants must beg to refer to the opinion which they gave in their Minute of the 24th of July last. 'That this body 'of testimony consists, almost exclusively, of the evidence 'of foreigners, most of them not above the rank of menial 'servants, or that of masters and attendants in hotels, wholly 'unacquainted with the English language, and some of them

'standing in the questionable situation of having been dis-
'missed or removed from H.R.H.'s service.'

Your servants are not insensible to the obstacles which may have arisen to any attempt, made according to their advice, to ascertain what was likely to be the evidence of the several English persons, of both sexes, who had been living in the family of the Princess of Wales. But to proceed in ignorance as to the probable effect of such testimony, would, they submit, be hazardous, particularly as your servants have reason to believe, that some of those persons of rank and station are at present in friendly correspondence with the Princess, profess an interest in all that concerns her, and would therefore come before any tribunal with a strong bias in her favour.

4. The law officers of the Crown and of the Duchy of Cornwall have given it as their opinion (an opinion in which your Majesty's servants certainly concur) that, in a proceeding upon a bill of divorce, not only must the 'evidence to 'make out the charge be strictly examined,' but 'an oppor-
'tunity must be given to the Princess of controverting 'that evidence and of establishing her innocence.'

In opposition to a measure of divorce, there can be little doubt but that H.R.H. would offer to state, not only matter of recrimination, but every circumstance which she might be disposed or advised to represent as neglect or ill usage, even from the time of her coming to this country.

In any private case such evidence would be admitted as of course; and although it might be contended that the public character of this transaction should induce Parliament to reject evidence of recrimination as a bar to divorce, yet it is impossible they should refuse to hear such evidence, as well as that of alleged neglect, ill usage, &c., when offered in palliation and extenuation, or to consider it whenever the situation and provision of the Princess of Wales, in consequence of divorce, came to be settled by law.

5. The proceedings upon a divorce bill must take place at the bar of the two Houses of Parliament, and must be public. It seems scarcely necessary, therefore, to say that any idea

of precluding a public proceeding by the authority of a secret committee must be entirely abandoned.

Your Majesty's confidential servants are of opinion that such a proceeding by a secret committee, which would amount substantially to a secret trial, would be revolting to the feelings of your subjects, and never could be adopted by Parliament; and they deem it to be their indispensable duty, most humbly, but most earnestly, to impress upon your Majesty's mind the effect which the publicity of such proceedings must have on public morals.

They beg leave further to submit that, however it might be attempted to confine the investigation, and the discussion growing out of it, to the conduct of the Princess of Wales since she left England in 1814, the defence of the Princess would not be confined to that period.

The opportunity would be eagerly seized of bringing forward, with every degree of exaggeration, and in the most invidious colours, any circumstance, at whatever period it may have occurred, which could in any way be brought to bear on this subject.

Even if it were possible to reject such matters as evidence when offered at the bar of Parliament, it would be obviously impossible to prevent their being introduced in speeches, motions, and petitions, and producing perhaps a still greater effect upon the public mind, because no opportunity would be afforded of contradicting or answering them.

Your Majesty's servants entreat your Majesty to reflect that success in a proceeding for divorce, even if success could be confidently anticipated, might be purchased with so much of personal discomfort to your Majesty, as would more than outweigh any advantage which your Majesty might expect to derive from it. But that a failure must be followed, not only by the hostile and triumphant establishment in this country of one who would in that case be represented as the intended victim of persecution, but by other consequences which your Majesty's confidential advisers cannot contemplate without alarm.

Under these circumstances, being deeply impressed with the conviction, that the measure of divorce, if proposed voluntarily and without necessity on the part of your Majesty's servants, might seriously prejudice the interests of your Majesty and of the monarchy, your Majesty's confidential servants cannot feel it consistent with their duty to recommend the originating of that measure.

But though your Majesty's servants, for the reasons above stated, must in the most earnest manner deprecate the measure of divorce, they conceive that there can be no difficulty which may not be overcome in securing your Majesty against the invasion of your dignity and comfort by the return of the Princess to England.

The notoriety of what have been, and still are, the situation and conduct of the Princess of Wales upon the Continent, and of the scandal thereby created throughout Europe, would, as your Majesty's servants hope and believe, induce Parliament to give a ready consent to any measure which, while it afforded to your Majesty this essential security, would be calculated, at the same time, to avoid discussions and disclosures, offensive to public decency, and likely to disturb the peace of the country.

And your servants are of opinion that the facilities of passing such a measure would be the greater, in proportion as it was divested of that penal character which must render such discussions and disclosures unavoidable.

By the expiration of the Act of the 51st of his late Majesty, the Princess becomes dependent upon your Majesty and Parliament for a provision during your Majesty's life.

The separation which has so long subsisted between your Majesty and the Princess, the sanction of that separation by the late King, and the recognition of it by Parliament, in the Act of the 54th of his late Majesty, together with the notoriety above stated, furnish, in the opinion of your Majesty's servants, sufficient grounds for your Majesty's recommending to Parliament, or (if this course should be less agreeable to your Majesty) for Parliament originating a bill, enabling your Majesty to make provision for H.R.H. by

an annuity, *payable only during her continued residence abroad.*

Upon the same grounds your Majesty would, in their opinion, be fully justified in withholding from the Princess those distinctions, which it is in your Majesty's option to confer upon her, in directing that she should not be named in the Liturgy, and in refusing to her the honour of coronation.

The intercourse which took place with Mr. Brougham last summer, affords just reason for believing that the Princess would be advised to acquiesce in an arrangement founded upon these principles.

Your Majesty's servants would, however, ill discharge their duty to your Majesty if they were to presume to hold out to your Majesty the assurance that all the evils to which they have adverted, would certainly be avoided by the adoption of the qualified measure which they have ventured to propose.

From the nature of the case some measure must be taken; but the choice between the different measures is also, from the nature of the case, a choice between difficulties.

They are, however, unanimously of opinion that, by the course which they humbly recommend, the risk of hostile discussions would be in a great degree diminished; and that the mischiefs resulting from them, if they should unfortunately arise, would in a still greater degree be alleviated.

If the Princess and her advisers should force inquiry, the act would be theirs. The agitation of all the delicate questions connected with this subject would be ascribed to them.

The evidence, of which your Majesty is in possession, would be received with very different impressions if produced at their call; and it would then be open for your Majesty and your Government to take such new course of proceeding as the new circumstances of the case might render advisable.

Your Majesty's servants cannot conclude without again imploring your Majesty's indulgent construction of anything which they may appear to your Majesty to have said amiss in explaining, justifying, and enforcing the opinions which

it has been incumbent upon them to submit to your Majesty.

It would have been matter of the deepest regret to your Majesty's confidential servants, if, on coming to this decision, they had found themselves under the painful obligation of postponing their regard for your Majesty's feelings to great public interests. It is, therefore, an inexpressible consolation to them, that in the discharge of their duty on this occasion, they have not had to separate considerations so intimately blended, but that the same decision which seems the least likely to unsettle and agitate the public mind at the commencement of your Majesty's reign, is, at the same time, that which they conscientiously believe to be most conducive to your Majesty's dignity and peace of mind.

Docket on above, in Mr. Canning's handwriting.

Feb. 10, 1820.

I concur entirely in the Minute of this day, as a *whole!* As a part of that whole, I agree to the proposed alteration in the Liturgy; it is strictly conformable to the situation in which the Royal person in question will necessarily stand, when the complete separation, to which our Minute is directed, shall have taken place.

But I could not have agreed to the omission of her name if any *penal* process, of whatever kind, had been in contemplation. In that case, I think the person to be accused could not, without injustice, have been divested before trial of any of the privileges of her present situation.

Feb. 12, 1820.

The King has perused the Minute of Cabinet of the 10th of February, with some surprise and much regret.

The King cannot satisfy himself that any objection arises to the measure of divorce, by Act of Parliament, from the ordinary usage of Parliament not to entertain bills of divorce without a previous sentence in an Ecclesiastical Court, and a verdict of damages in a Court of Law.

Where an individual seeks the aid of Parliament for the redress of his private injury, it is reasonable to require that he should first establish the fact of injury before the proper tribunals of the country. But this principle can have no application to a case where a remedy is sought upon the grounds of public mischief.

The King cannot concur in the doubts arising from religious scruples, whether any divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* would be valid, unless supported by the authority of some ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The King has been informed, that in the English law marriage is a civil contract; that the sentence of the Ecclesiastical Court does not profess to give the sanction of religion to the separation of man and wife, but is merely an adjudication, that the misconduct of one of the contracting parties has forfeited the claim to the civil rights arising out of that contract.

The King understands that it is not to be doubted that the statement made by the witnesses, if true, in fact amounts to decisive evidence of criminality; and that these statements are true in fact, has been forced upon the mind of the King from the extraordinary coincidence of the testimony of different witnesses, who have been separated from each other for years, and have been in no habits of connexion, or communication.

It is true, that some of these witnesses are exposed to observation, as being discarded servants; and that it may be said of most of the others, that they are foreigners.

But these observations lose their force when the whole evidence is consistent; where the nature of the facts does not admit of other testimony; where the person, who principally examined the witnesses, is of great legal experience, and conducted the examination with the utmost caution, and uniformly rejected all testimony which was rendered suspicious, either by the manner, or character of the party tendered as a witness; and where the general tendency of the evidence is confirmed by several English persons, who had the opportunity of witnessing some facts.

The King cannot apprehend any hazard from proceeding in ignorance of the testimony of the several English persons, who were living in the family of the Princess of Wales. It is notorious that nearly all of these persons left the service of the Princess in disgust; and that fact is in itself evidence of some impropriety in the conduct of the Princess; and if they cannot and will not speak to direct criminality, it is not to be believed that they can disaffirm that sort of general conduct, which squares with and confirms the more particular testimony of the other witnesses.

If, in the proceedings for a divorce, all attempts at recrimination were excluded, by reason of the public character of the transaction, and the divorce received the sanction of Parliament, the King is confident that the integrity and good sense of Parliament would protect the public interests from any renewed attempt at recrimination, when the question merely turned upon the extent of provision to be made for the divorced person.

The King is desirous that the proceedings should be such as to afford to the Princess full opportunity for defence.

The King imagines that from the judicial character of the House of Lords, and its power of examining witnesses upon oath, the proceeding will commence there; and the King was led to believe that the forms of the House of Lords permitted a committee to sit with closed doors, so as at least to prevent the publication of testimony there, until the case was gone through.

The King would be highly gratified, if it were possible to avoid the publicity of such proceedings; but from the sense which he has of the great public interest of this measure, he cannot admit that the unfortunate moral effect of the disclosure of the depravity, in this case, ought to lead to the impunity of crime.

If the nature of the proceedings left the Princess at liberty to attempt recrimination, then it is not likely she would confine herself within the period of her residence upon the Continent; but, inasmuch as the principle of the proceeding renders such an attempt altogether irrelevant, and her

right extends only to a defence against a charge of criminal conduct since she quitted England in 1814, the King does not apprehend that any prior matter can be introduced as bearing upon that subject. The King is fully sensible that it is not possible to restrain the malignant use of speeches, motions, and petitions; and the King has fully made up his mind to all the discomfort to which he can be exposed from those sources.

But if the proceedings in Parliament be conducted with that firmness and dignity, which belong to the conscious discharge of a great public duty, the King trusts that such malignity may be checked by the decent expression of public opinion, both in and out of Parliament; waiting upon the result of a judicial inquiry, in which every degree of fair attention is paid to the interest of the person accused.

The King cannot bring himself to reflect on the consequences of failing in the measure of divorce; certain as he is of that conduct, on the part of the Princess of Wales, which renders such a measure of high national importance, and confident as he is of the weight of the testimony by which satisfaction in that respect is to be brought home to every mind. But if the King could concede the possibility of such a result, he would not shrink from the discharge of a duty essential to the interests of his foreign dominions as well as to those of this country, to his family, and to the dignity of his own character.

The King cannot conceive the advantages of the qualified measure of a bill in Parliament to settle an annuity upon the Princess during her continued residence abroad.

It is stated that such a measure may be expected to be adopted by Parliament, and to be satisfactory to the public mind, upon the fact of prior separation, and the general notoriety of misconduct. But if the public mind be already so possessed with the unfitness of the Princess to hold the royal dignity in England, that it may be expected that, without any trial or opportunity for defence, the public are prepared to banish her from the country, and leave her only the empty name of Queen; what apprehension can there be

that the public opinion will not follow the measure of divorce, which, depriving her further only of the name of Queen, proceeds not upon mere general notoriety, but upon guilt proved upon a fair trial, and after full opportunity of defence?

But why is it to be believed that such a measure, which is nothing short of a verdict of guilt, is to be submitted to by the Princess, without all the evils of public agitation, and all the attempts, both in Parliament and out of Parliament, at malignant recrimination, which are expected to attend the bill for divorce? Will the Princess be less active, because she has more cause for complaint? and because she is to be condemned unheard?

If reliance is to be placed on the interference of Mr. Brougham, it cannot be expected that the Princess will now concede from the consciousness of guilt, and the desire of securing an income; but since, in the case of the half measure, or of the whole measure, she must equally lose all present consideration here, and has nothing to gain in foreign countries, it is hardly to be thought that, if she will submit in one case, she will resist in the other, if it become unavoidable.

The King, therefore, altogether disapproves of the proposal of settling an annuity on the Princess, payable only during her residence abroad, because it appears to the King to be exposed to every evil which is suggested as likely to attend the measure of divorce, and, at the same time, it neither vindicates the national honour abroad, secures tranquillity at home, nor protects the personal comforts of the King.

But, waving any present proceeding to establish the guilt of the Princess, and thus making such proceeding impossible in future, it leaves her at liberty to return to England with impunity (at the risk only of her pecuniary provision), for the purpose of entering into a new contest to assert her rights of a Queen, whenever faction may offer to her a more favourable opportunity.

GEORGE R.

February 14, 1820.

Your Majesty's confidential servants have considered, with the most respectful attention, the paper which your Majesty has been most graciously pleased to communicate to them; and whilst they entreat your Majesty to believe that nothing can be further from their intention than to presume to enter into a controversial discussion with your Majesty, they request your Majesty's permission to advert shortly to some of the points stated in that letter, in order that there may not remain any misapprehension on any part of this distressing subject.

Your Majesty will permit them to observe that, in their Minute of the 10th instant, your servants did not bring forward each of the successive objections therein stated to the measure of divorce as separately conclusive, but that it is upon the combined operation of them all that they founded the advice which they humbly submitted to your Majesty.

The difference, between the case of a Sovereign and that of a private individual, had not only not escaped their attention, but was one of the principal points to which it was directed.

They admitted that, in the case of the Sovereign, a verdict for damages could not be contemplated.

They admitted that a proceeding in the Ecclesiastical Court would be in the highest degree unadvisable.

It followed that a bill of divorce, if introduced at all, must be introduced without these preliminaries, and consequently without any previous judicial decision; and it appeared to them that a measure so unusual ought to be weighed with peculiar caution.

They did not, indeed, in their last Minute, recall to your Majesty's recollection (what they had stated on a former occasion) the reasons which rendered a proceeding in the Ecclesiastical Court unadvisable; particularly the length of time such a proceeding would occupy, and the invariable practice of those courts to admit recrimination of every kind: but they thought it right to bring under your Majesty's view the religious scruples entertained by some persons

respecting the validity of divorce procured without ecclesiastical authority, which, however, they did not state as scruples entertained by themselves, but as those of which they knew the existence, and the very existence of which deserved serious consideration.

Marriage is undoubtedly a civil contract, but it is *not* a civil contract only. The information that your Majesty has received, that 'the sentence of the Ecclesiastical Court is 'merely an adjudication that the misconduct of one of the 'contracting parties has forfeited the claim to the civil rights 'arising out of the contract,' though supported, they are aware, by some legal authority, they beg leave to assure your Majesty is erroneous.

A paper, containing the grounds on which your Majesty's servants venture to pronounce so confident an opinion on this subject, will be laid before your Majesty with the least possible delay.

Upon the question of the sufficiency of the evidence, your servants represented themselves to be satisfied that the statements of the witnesses, if not rebutted, nor discredited, would amount to decisive proof of criminality. But they may not have made sufficiently clear the grounds of their apprehension as to the nature and effect of the evidence.

The coincidences to which your Majesty refers, and which they had not overlooked, afford a strong argument in support of the truth of this body of testimony. But amongst the witnesses, there are some, whose past situation would naturally expose them to suspicion; there may be others whose characters might be discredited; there may be others, again, against whom corruption might be alleged, and the allegation supported by testimony of which it might be difficult to detect the falsehood; and all would be, more or less, exposed to the danger of being confounded by cross-examination.

The experience of judicial proceedings, both as to their result and their impression upon the public mind, affords abundant proof of the degree in which any case may be affected by circumstances of this nature, and the risk must

unquestionably be aggravated where so great a proportion of the witnesses are foreigners, and in a low station of life.

Your Majesty's servants are unwilling to touch again upon the delicate point of recrimination, further than may be necessary to convey to your Majesty a distinct impression of their opinions upon that subject.

Your servants do not think it necessary to enter into any minute examination as to what may be the particular stages of the proceeding in which the introduction of recriminatory evidence might be resisted, or on which it might be impossible to exclude it; but your servants continue to have a strong persuasion that, in some stage or other of a hostile proceeding for divorce, such evidence must find admission; even if there should be stages of the proceedings in which the admission of it might be justifiably and successfully resisted, the statement and description of it could not be effectually prevented: and the very search for it, in the spirit in which that search would be made, must be attended with mischiefs and disquietudes to which it is not necessary to do more than allude.

Your Majesty's confidential servants deeply regret that your Majesty should have been led to believe that, whatever the forms of the House of Lords may permit, a Committee of that House would sit with closed doors upon a proceeding of a judicial and criminal character.

The publication of the evidence in print might indeed, during the course of the proceedings, be restrained by order of the House, as far as that order could be made effectual. But every principle which would entitle the Princess to the right of defending her conduct, would entitle her to the right of making her defence public, according to the practice of the law and constitution of this country.

Your Majesty's servants cannot satisfy themselves that the limitation of the charge against the Princess, to the period which has elapsed since she quitted England in 1814, could also limit her defence to that period.

The purpose for which any party against whom divorce by Act of Parliament is sought, is entitled to introduce re-

criminatory allegations of neglect or ill-usage, is to invalidate the claim of the other party to this special relief, or to palliate her own misconduct. Such recrimination and allegations, if brought forward in this case, may obviously extend to circumstances antecedent to 1814.

Your Majesty's servants acknowledge with every feeling of respect, gratitude, and attachment, your Majesty's invariable readiness to incur personal inconvenience in the discharge of that which you consider as a public duty.

But consistently with the view which they have taken in their former communication, of what is likely to be most conducive to your Majesty's dignity and comfort, as well as to the interests of your people, they cannot advise your Majesty to originate a proceeding by which all these objects would in their opinion be put to hazard.

Your Majesty's servants trust to your Majesty's indulgence not to impute to them an unreasonable prejudice in favour of their own suggestions, if they presume to offer a few remarks in explanation and defence of the measure which they had proposed to institute instead of a bill of divorce.

By this qualified measure they never could presume to undertake entirely to secure your Majesty against all inconveniences.

In truth, as far as relates to the possible return of the Princess to this country, security could not be obtained by divorce itself, unless that measure were accompanied with the enactment of banishment under the sanction of severe penalties.

They have reasonable grounds, however, for believing, that a qualified measure might not meet with resistance from the advisers of the Princess of Wales, and even from the Princess herself.

They entertain this belief, not only from the obvious circumstance that the Princess is dependent for her provision, during your Majesty's life, upon your Majesty and Parliament, but in consequence of the proposition which was made by Mr. Brougham in the course of last summer—a proposition which went beyond that now submitted to your Majesty,

and to which Mr. Brougham declared his readiness to advise the Princess to consent.

If the proposition submitted by your servants does not go quite so far as that suggested by Mr. Brougham, it is not from any disinclination on their part to adopt and act upon Mr. Brougham's proposition to its full extent, but that could only be done either by consent, or by the introduction, in the first instance, of a measure strictly penal, which could not be carried through Parliament without the production of evidence, at the risk of consequences which your Majesty's servants deprecate, but which they forbear again to particularize.

To attain the same object by consent would, in their opinion, be highly desirable, and might, they think, be attended with a prospect of success.

Between the probabilities of such success to a measure strictly penal, and to one of a milder character, there is this essential difference, that every man who feels, as your Majesty's servants feel, a dread of the mischiefs to be produced by the disclosures which must inevitably arise out of a hostile discussion, would hail with satisfaction an expedient which, while it might equally secure your Majesty's dignity and comfort, would spare to Parliament and to the nation the pain of such disclosures.

Your servants have little doubt that many of the most respectable members of both Houses of Parliament would be induced to agree to a milder measure, for the express purpose of escaping these discussions, but would resist the stronger measure, even if they might think it just, if founded upon sufficient evidence, from the simple apprehension that, if that measure were persisted in and opposed, it would and ought to bring the evidence (with all that it must provoke) into public view.

With reference to the probability of the Princess's acquiescence in the measure which your servants had proposed, your Majesty puts the question, why it should be expected that the Princess would not resist when she has more 'cause to complain, and is to be condemned unheard?' Your

Majesty's servants cannot participate in the opinion that she would have 'more cause to complain' of such a proceeding, than if she were exposed, by the introduction of a bill of divorce, to the complete destruction of character, and to the scanty provision which the passing of such a bill might leave her. By acquiescing in the qualified measure, the Princess would without risk secure a certain and liberal income, and her situation upon the Continent would not be materially varied from what it is at present.

Nothing could be farther from their intention, nor, as they humbly conceive, from the true effect of their proposition, than that the Princess should be 'condemned unheard.' The annexation of the condition of her continued residence abroad to the grant of a liberal provision, is not, in their judgment, a condemnation.

If she should be persuaded to view it in that light, she would be under no obligation to allow herself to be 'condemned unheard.' It would be open to her, as has been already stated, to 'force inquiry.'

And they particularly beg your Majesty to revert to that passage in their former communication, in which they anticipated the possibility of the Princess being unhappily advised to come to such a decision, and admitted that it would alter the state of the case, and would leave your Majesty in the situation of being at liberty to pursue with advantage such measures as might then, in those new circumstances, appear most advisable.

To sum up as shortly as possible the opinions which they have humbly submitted to your Majesty, they beg leave to observe that,

1. If your Majesty and the Princess were in the situation of private individuals, it may be assumed that a divorce could not possibly be obtained.

2. A bill of divorce could, therefore, in this case, be proposed only on the paramount consideration of a *great public interest.*

3. But in the judgment of your Majesty's servants, the proposition of a bill of divorce would, under all the circum-

stances, produce public evils and inconveniences far overbalancing any public advantage which could be expected to be derived from that measure.

Whatever other measure, therefore, they might feel themselves justified in proposing, the originating a bill of divorce is that which they cannot recommend.

Your Majesty's servants have felt it their duty, after renewed and most diligent deliberation to restate this their unanimous opinion, with the utmost plainness and precision; an opinion, not now conceived or declared to your Majesty for the first time, but in substance distinctly stated to your Majesty in their Minute of the 17th June, 1819.

But they implore your Majesty to allow them to conclude what they may have to address to your Majesty on this occasion, with an expression of the pain which they feel in not being able to adopt your Majesty's views, especially on a subject in which your Majesty's personal feelings are so deeply concerned.

If the most affectionate attachment; if the most lively sense of the delicacy and difficulty of your Majesty's embarrassing situation; if a grateful recollection of all your Majesty's kindness to themselves collectively and individually, and of all that your Majesty's administration of the Government has already contributed to the glory of the country, could overrule in their minds the sense of their duty to your Majesty, or could justify them in their own consciences for tendering to your Majesty any other than a sincere and honest opinion, undoubtedly they would not have pressed upon your Majesty an opinion which it is matter of regret to them rather than of surprise to find still so repugnant to your Majesty's inclination.

Carlton House, February 17, 1820.

The King, in order to avoid all future misconception, desires to express in writing what he now considers to be the effect of the two communications dated the 10th and 14th of February instant.

The King understands that it is the intention of his confidential servants to propose to Parliament a bill for settling a provision on the Princess of Wales for the term of her life, and during her residence abroad, dependent, however, on the King's pleasure, for the purpose of enabling the King to secure, by condition with the Princess, such concessions on her part as appear to the King to be indispensable to the dignity of the Crown and his own personal honour and comfort.

The King also understands that, when it becomes necessary for the King's servants to open their views on this subject to Parliament, they will declare that they have received the King's commands to adopt this mitigated measure only for the purpose of avoiding disclosures and discussions of a most painful nature, to which resort never will be had, unless unavoidably wrung from the King by the Princess's refusing to accede to this measure and thereby driving matters to extremity; in which case the King's confidential servants will be bound to support to the utmost every measure which will be required for the due maintenance of the dignity of the Crown, the interests of the public, and the personal honour and feeling of the King.

The King further understands that it is the intention of his servants to assert and justify the omission of the Princess's name from the Liturgy.

This course of conduct on the part of the King's servants, if he rightly understands it (and if he is under misapprehension he wishes it explained), will be satisfactory to the King, who is ready, for the sake of public decorum and the public interest, to make, therefore, this great and painful sacrifice of his personal feelings.

GEORGE R.

Your Majesty's confidential servants have received with the liveliest gratitude your Majesty's gracious communication of yesterday.

They beg to be permitted to offer to your Majesty their humble acknowledgments for the noble and generous sacrifice which your Majesty has made of your personal feelings

(upon a subject on which those feelings must naturally be so much alive) to their dutiful representations, and to your own just sense of the public interest.

In obedience to your Majesty's commands, your Majesty's servants presume to make a single observation on the only point in your Majesty's communication which appears to require explanation.

Your Majesty's servants are clearly of opinion that the renewal and continuance, whether during her own natural life or during the joint lives of your Majesty and the Princess, of the annuity of 35,000*l.* to H.R.H., being the amount of that which expired with the Act of 1814, should be granted to her only *during her residence abroad;* and that your Majesty should be enabled to make up the annuity to an amount not exceeding in the whole 50,000*l.*, the difference between the 35,000*l.* and the 50,000*l.* to be granted or withholden at your Majesty's pleasure, or upon such other conditions, as your Majesty may think fit to impose. Your Majesty's servants have only further to express to your Majesty their deep sense of your Majesty's goodness to them, and of the disinterested magnanimity with which your Majesty has acted on this painful and trying occasion.

Under the very critical circumstances on which Lord Liverpool and his colleagues had to come to a decision, the course which they adopted, as indicated in the preceding correspondence, was at once honourable and manly, loyal and patriotic.

It was evident that her Majesty's chief adviser knew enough of her actual conduct on the Continent to lead him to the conclusion that it was not for her benefit to force an inquiry, which could only lead to disgraceful disclosures, and that she ought not to be 'misled by false misrepresentations to suppose that 'any popularity she might acquire for a moment 'would make any lasting impression on her case.'

Under these impressions Mr. Brougham had prevailed on Mr. Denman to postpone the presentation of their appointments, as attorney and solicitor-general to the Queen, as long as possible, in order, as he (Mr. Brougham) said, 'to avoid the raising any 'public question touching the Queen, which he had 'always been most anxious to avoid;' but at last it became impossible to delay any longer, because, had 'the least suspicion been raised in the Queen's mind 'that they were sacrificing or postponing her interests, 'it would be fatal to any influence they might hope 'to have with her in these negotiations, and thus 'prove highly injurious to the King's interests.'

Accordingly, on the 11th of April the appointments were duly presented in open court and accepted; the Lord Chancellor declaring that 'he would consult no 'views and regard no considerations in the matter, 'except such as were purely professional.' This declaration from 'so high a political quarter,' seems to have 'surprised' her Majesty's advisers, although it was only such as might have been reasonably expected from the impartiality of an eminent judge.

Mr. Brougham himself was in an awkward position. With a firm conviction that the Queen's conduct had been such as would not bear investigation, he had yet to act the part of a legal advocate before the public, and to assume her innocence. Mr. Denman, it has been asserted, believed in that innocence to the last—at all events, it seems to be almost certain that before the trial he was persuaded of her innocence.

The evidence which the Ministers possessed of her Majesty's proceedings, and their notoriety in the neighbourhood where she had taken up her residence,

coupled with the avowed intention of her legal adviser to do his utmost to prevent her return, made them too confident that the Queen never would brave the danger of a public inquiry.

There were some mistakes too committed. Somehow the newspapers got hold of the ministerial decision against the divorce clause—then she was 'proclaimed 'and acknowledged in all the courts.' 'The result of 'these blunders,' said Mr. Brougham, 'will be (if I 'know woman, or the one in question) to make all 'advice most difficult, and I scarce can hope for 'acquiescence.'

But if the Ministers made mistakes, so did Mr. Brougham. It was a great one, when, for his own convenience, he insisted upon her 'coming within a day of Calais:' as the nearer she came to England the greater her difficulty in returning. It was a still greater, withholding from her the proposition of the Government until she had arrived at St. Omer.

The Queen's decision to return and brave everything was taken against the advice of her legal adviser. It was Alderman Wood whose influence prevailed. On the 7th of June, 1820, her Majesty, surrounded by an enormous mob, made her entry into London, and took up her residence at the alderman's house.

It was ill-judged, on the part of the Ministry, providing no residence for the Queen. Had she had apartments assigned to her at St. James's Palace, or, had a handsome house been engaged for her with a guard of honour at the door, the appearance of persecution would have been avoided, and the excitement would have been materially diminished. Till proved

guilty, she ought not to have been treated with neglect.

On the day of her Majesty's arrival a Message was sent down by the King to Parliament, with a green bag sealed up, enclosing papers relating to the Queen's conduct. Lord Castlereagh moved, that they should be referred to a secret and select Committee.

Various efforts were then made, in which Mr. Wilberforce took the lead, to prevent the dire necessity of breaking the seal of the green bag. In the discussions which ensued Mr. Canning twice took a part. All the particulars are well known. When all hope of an amicable adjustment was over, Mr. Canning thought it his duty to seek an audience of the King—an account of which is contained in the following memorandum written to a friend who was abroad; and, as it was to pass through a foreign post-office, other names were substituted for the real ones. In the memorandum, Mars means the King; Dirce, the Queen; the Magdalen, Lord Liverpool; Marcus, Mr. Canning.

June 25, 1820.

Marcus said that, negotiation being now at an end, and hostile proceedings unavoidable, he felt it his duty to lay before Mars an unreserved exposition of his views of his own situation, and of the course which he should henceforward pursue.

But, first, he would say that he entirely approved of all that had hitherto been done since the unfortunate arrival of Dirce; that Mars had put himself completely in the right, and ought not, in his (Marcus's) opinion, to make any further concession.

Marcus then adverted to his former habits of intimacy with Dirce, and to the confidence which she had reposed in

him on many occasions, by unreserved communications on the subject of her own affairs, and stated that it was impossible for him to take any part in criminatory proceedings against a person towards whom he had stood in so confidential a relation. As a mediator between Dirce and Mars he had exerted, and would still exert, if the occasion permitted it, his best endeavours; but he could not become Dirce's accuser.

Marcus felt bound to state his intentions quite clearly, because he felt that Mars had a right to the entire services of any one in the situation of Marcus (especially on a case so personally interesting to him, and so important in other respects); and he therefore submitted to Mars, whether it would appear to him, on the whole, desirable that Marcus should continue in the service of Mars altogether silent and inactive on this particular question, or that he should yield his place to some person who might be able to devote himself unreservedly to the whole of his duties as a servant of Mars.

Marcus added that he had not come absolutely to tender his resignation. Such a step would have carried with it an appearance of dissatisfaction, or complaint, which Marcus was very far from feeling, having nothing but kindness to acknowledge on the part of Mars since the commencement of their acquaintance; he came merely to enable Mars to decide upon the course which he should think best for his service.

Marcus then drew the attention of Mars to the possible courses which the discussions might take, and to the probable consequences, in each different state of things, of Marcus's continuing in his service without taking part in the discussions respecting Dirce, or of his retirement altogether. It was obvious that either course would have its disadvantages; but with a view to probable contingencies the leaning of Marcus's opinion was, that he might be of more use to Mars, if he were to retire.

Mars expressed his strong sense of the manly proceeding of Marcus on this occasion, and his especial satisfaction at his having come at once to Mars with this communication,

instead of conveying it to him through a third person. He acquiesced with perfect cordiality and good humour in the adoption by Marcus of the line of proceeding which he had announced with respect to Dirce's affairs, said it was what he had expected, but plainly intimated, at the same time, his impression that Marcus had not told all his reasons for declining to take a share in the hostile proceedings against Dirce.

With respect to the question of Marcus's retirement, as it affected the general interest of Mars's service, Mars declared that it was full of difficulty, and that he should wish to have a few hours for the consideration of it before he returned a final answer to Marcus's communication. After a conversation of more than an hour, in the most friendly tone, they shook hands at parting, and Mars again assured Marcus of his entire approval of Marcus's conduct; that whatever might be his (Mars's) decision upon this matter, whether to adopt Marcus's advice with respect to his retirement or not, he should never cease to feel the sincerest regard for Marcus. He said further, that if ever he should hear (as he probably might) reflections thrown out against Marcus for stopping short after having gone so far in the proceedings against Dirce, he (Mars) should uniformly declare that Marcus had acted in the most manly, and honourable, and gentlemanlike manner.

The next day the King sent his answer to Mr. Canning through Lord Liverpool. He insisted upon Mr. Canning's remaining; following his own course with respect to the Queen, whatever that might be, and with perfect liberty to assign his Majesty's express injunction for remaining, if it ever should be necessary to assign any reason at all.

A short time after this interview with the King, Mr. Canning thus writes to Lord Liverpool:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

India Board, July 5, 1820.

My dear Liverpool,

Situated as I am, I have no sort of right to interpose my opinion in any point connected with the process against the Queen. But, as a bystander and *amicus curiæ*, I cannot help declaring to you the anxiety which I feel respecting the intention of introducing into the bill a clause of divorce. I wish I may be mistaken, but I confess to you my firm and deliberate opinion is, that such a clause, as it changes the whole nature of your proceeding, so will it completely alter the impression which your measure would be otherwise calculated to make on the mind of the public; it will change the nature of the proceeding from national to personal, and it will divert the mind of the public from the moral and political considerations of offence against the State, to a comparison of the claims and respective conduct of the individuals concerned.

I hope Lord Grey's volunteer declaration against the right of recrimination has not misled you. Possibly it was INTENDED to do so, but of this I am perfectly clear beforehand, that he may, if he will, with perfect consistency, retract that declaration as to a clause of divorce, which he may say he intended (and which, to do him justice, his speech, as reported, shows him to have intended) only with respect to a proceeding on the part of the State.

Surely, surely, it is not good for the King himself, any more than for the Crown, or for the kingdom, that he should be made a personal party to this bill. All the anomalies of the case are definable, as a State case; but as a personal one, I doubt whether, even in the House of Lords, you can defend them successfully; but, in the House of Commons, I am confident you cannot. If asked to-day whether you intend to set the King free to marry again, what are you to answer? If affirmatively, do you not believe that you suggest the very strongest argument for defeating the bill, and the most dangerous topics for effecting that purpose? If negatively, where, in God's name, is the advantage of

carrying the weight of a clause of divorce for no assignable use or object?

I am quite persuaded that the success of your measure will be in exact proportion to the degree in which the King's person is kept out of sight in it; and for his sake no less than for yours, I earnestly wish that the penalties might be confined to those which are necessary to vindicate the State. Once again I have no right to offer these suggestions, but I feel the weight of them so strongly, and so painfully, that I should not do you or myself justice, if I were not to lay them before you. I do so after a night's reflection, which has confirmed them in my own mind, but not after any communication with any other person except one, and that a Cabinet Minister, who does not know of my writing to you.

Ever very sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

At the end of the month Lord Liverpool offered to Mr. Canning to change his office for that of Home Secretary. He thus replied to the offer:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Gloucester Lodge, July 30, 1820.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I have not till to-day had leisure to reflect, with the seriousness which it required, upon the matter of our confidence of Monday last.

But when I once began to reflect upon it, I was surprised that I had not at once seen that I could give but one answer to your kind inquiry.

By the terms of it, the case to be provided for, if occurring in my absence, would occur while the question of the Queen was yet pending. Now I have had great difficulty in reconciling to any just sense of duty to the King, and of fairness to my colleagues, the remaining where I am, even in compliance with your wishes, and in obedience to the King's commands; nor do I think I could have done so with comfort and propriety, if my office had not happened to be one so much detached from the ordinary course of business,

and so little in immediate contact with the King. When to that circumstance is added the consideration that by remaining (however uselessly) I share the *fate*, if not the labours of the Administration, the course which I have adopted may, perhaps, be less liable to objection and misconstruction than would have been a determined adherence to my own first disposition. But Lord Sidmouth's office is just the one upon the daily details of which this unhappy question must operate with the most sensible and constant effect, infecting, as it cannot but do, every measure of police, every case of tumult or of libel, &c.; and the Home Secretary of State is precisely the Minister with whom (next only to yourself and the Lord Chancellor) the King has a right to expect that he may communicate most unreservedly on every point connected with the question in its present state, or in its probable or possible consequences. I do feel, therefore, that it would be hardly fair to the King that I should undertake (even if his Majesty should be graciously pleased to confide it to me) an office so circumstanced during the pendency of this calamitous and perplexing discussion. Beyond that, who shall pretend to see before them?

Ever, my dear Liverpool,

Most sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

Early in August Mr. Canning went abroad, before the proceedings against the Queen commenced.

CHAPTER XIX.

TRIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE.

THE trial commenced on the 17th of August. Before the bill was introduced, Government decided, contrary to their original determination, on the insertion of a divorce clause. An effort was made in Committee to throw out this clause, but it was carried by a majority of 129 to 62.

While the trial was going on Mr. Canning wrote the following letters:—

(*Most Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR HUSKISSON, Paris, Oct. 2, 1820.

You must have misunderstood Backhouse, or Backhouse must have misunderstood me; or I must have been very unreasonable in my demands, and very inaccurate in my calculations, if I expected a letter of yours (to be written in the middle of September) to meet me at Munich.

I was, however, delighted to find one amongst my letters here, on my arrival yesterday; and I will not let to-morrow's messenger go without an acknowledgment of it.

Had I written to you from Munich I should have told you (as I did Liverpool), that my intention was to stay here about a week, for the purpose of seeing Mrs. C. and Harriet settled comfortably for the two or three months that they will remain here, and to be in London, or at Walmer, by the middle of the second week in this month.

The unexpected earliness of the defence in the House of Lords has deranged the calculations on which that intention was founded.

It now appears, from Liverpool's estimate, as well as yours, that it is possible the proceedings of the Lords may terminate before the end of this month. It would be a matter of great satisfaction that they should terminate before I come over; and, at all events, that the preliminary meeting of the House of Commons should take place in my absence. My present wish, therefore, is to defer my setting out from this place, at least till the week after next, so as to be sure of not arriving in London till after the 17th, and to take the chance of being enabled, by a few days' further delay, to outstay the conclusion of the Lords, and possibly even to find Liverpool at Walmer. I am confident that I am better away, so long as I am not *obliged* to return; and I have happily nothing in my office to recall me. The House of Commons, I presume, will take some strong steps to enforce attendance; but I know of none that can prevent one from answering to one's name at half-past four, and walking out of the House at a quarter before five, though, by the way, I should hope (for decency's sake), that the meetings on the bill will be *practically* at '10 of the clock' in the 'morning.'

The bill will not pass; that was and is my opinion. What is to follow the rejection of it, I do not pretend to foresee. But should it pass, does any one see the consequences then? I protest I do not.

It is quite evident that the question of guilt or innocence enters for nothing in the general public feeling. That feeling (putting the Jacobins and Revolutionists out of account) among the better sort, and among the mass of mankind and womankind (no unessential combination) is composed of two ingredients:—(1st.) The thing is not fit to be discussed. (2nd.) You have no right to provoke the discussion of it. And if both these propositions are true (as I, in my conscience, think they are), the question whether the thing was or was not matter of fact, is not legally any more than morally a necessary point for decision. I have written *legally* by mistake for *logically*. But though wrong-written, it is not wrong in sense.

For the plague and perplexity of this accursed case is such,

that every change which mends its morality spoils its law. A bill of divorce (though this was an unusual sort of one—though I think, and always have thought, the claim of divorce untenable), yet had some semblance of a legislative character. But that clause left out, what remains? Nothing, but to do by bill that which, in 1809, we refused to do by resolution; and refused, too, on the very ground that Parliament was *not* a tribunal of morality. I wish you would turn to the speeches of that day in defence of the Duke of York. Mine, if I am not mistaken in my recollections of it (it was published separately, after pretty careful revision) turned wholly on the challenge to produce a legal, specific, tangible *crime*, before they called on Parliament for a legislative punishment. The clause of divorce was bad enough, God knows; but the omission of it, *after it had been put in*, leaves the measure open to the full operation of this precedent.

In short, turn which way you will, I see no light, and I do verily believe that there never fell upon a country an evil so gratuitously mischievous, and so entirely without compensation.

I told Liverpool, in a letter from Munich, that I doubted whether the bill would pass. The divorce clause was then in it. I tell him to-day, that, though I think the omission of that clause likely enough to facilitate the passing of the bill in the House of Lords, I think it furnishes an argument against it in the House of Commons. And that argument is the one I just now mentioned to you.

It becomes now a pure penal enactment for *immorality*; and when, from the beginning of time, did such an enactment take place? And where, if it take place now, is this new species of legislation to end?

Let any one put this question to himself, and answer it fairly, 'Do you think we could get the Duke of York off, as we 'did in 1809, AFTER such a bill as this will be, *when it ceases* '*to be a bill of divorce*, had been enacted?' I would defy you to do so; and, after all, without the clause of divorce, of what value is the bill, supposing it passed into a law, to

the King? Would he have given sixpence for it originally in that state? Not he. But having tasted the sweets of discussion, he may be now willing to compromise for getting *anything* through, so as not *to appear* to come out of court, as, in fact he does, completely defeated. But this is precisely the mortification from which we, his servants, ought to have saved him. We ought to have said, from the beginning, as I suppose is said to him now, and as *we* thought *then*, just as much as *now* (though there has been an intermediate stage, to me perfectly unaccountable, of vacillation of opinion), 'Sir, *divorce* is IMPOSSIBLE.' 'What, if she comes, if she 'braves, if she insults?' &c. &c. 'Yes, Sir, in any case, '*divorce* is IMPOSSIBLE. Other things may be tried, other 'expedients may be resorted to; but *divorce*, we tell you 'again, is IMPOSSIBLE. It can never be.'

Had we stuck to this, and this, I say, was our opinion in February (*mine always, now* more than it was then—not more then than it is now), depend upon it he would have discarded Leach, and played us fair. But, there were conferences as well as minutes, and I suspect the unwritten counteracted the written communications. And see the fruits!—a Government brought into contempt and detestation; a kingdom thrown into such ferment and convulsion, as no other kingdom or Government ever recovered from without a revolution; but I hope *we* shall.

As to him, for whose sake we softened our refusal and qualified our arguments in February, bitterly he must repent our complaisance, and justifiably—if and when he thinks fit—he may resent it.

Grey's game is just what you say, and has been from the outset. Yet, marvellous to think, Liverpool was (for a time at least) taken in by it, and spoke of Grey's admission as so much gain. Brougham has had his game too, and from a much earlier period, I suspect, than we apprehended. He dreaded compromise. He thought he saw how it might be effected. He barred that course by offering his own mediation. He thus got the thing into his own hands; and having got it there, he let it languish till success was hopeless.

He *could not* go to Geneva, but he could go the circuit; and all this time, marvellous to think again! Liverpool thought Brougham in earnest and plain dealing!

I would have pledged my life to settle the whole matter last summer, or at any time before the fatal measure of the Liturgy. I would have undertaken it even after, though with diminished confidence of success. But the Government was not prepared to pursue their own course by any means but those which were indicated to them; and these indications came from a quarter which wished for extremities, as the way of getting at what they are now enjoying!

But it is high time to cease these unhappy, useless reflections, especially as I have many letters to despatch for to-morrow's messenger, and have not yet read one of the several series of newspapers which I find accumulated here, for the last two months. At Munich I had the perusal of Taylor's *Courier* and *Chronicle*, to the end of the first week in September; but that is my last date, and the *Times* I have not yet seen.

I suppose this letter will not find you in town. But you will be sure to find me here by the next Tuesday's messenger.—Adieu.

Ever yours, G. C.

(*Most Private and most Confidential.*)

My dear Liverpool, Paris, Oct. 10, 1820.

I venture to presume that by this time you are nearly of my opinion, that the bill will not pass the House of Commons. Will it pass the House of Lords? I doubt it. Is it desirable it should pass the House of Lords, to be thrown out in the House of Commons? I doubt that still more. It is upon this last point more particularly, that the course which the defence is taking, appears to me to tell. Even had the case for the prosecution remained unshaken, the House of Commons, I think, would equally have refused to pass the bill. But I think this refusal would have been of quite a different character, and would have had quite a dif-

ferent effect, if proceeding only from a determination not to meddle with the business, to get rid of it without a hearing from them, which will belong to that refusal, if founded upon the enactment of the bill, or upon defect or contradiction of the evidence.

In neither House do I see what is to be your way out of the divorce clause. That it could never pass has been my opinion from the hour of our first discussion to the present. Nor could I ever understand how you got over the (to my mind) unanswerable objections to such a proceeding, contained in our Minute of February, and in the Lord Chancellor's accompanying paper. But the clause being once proposed, I as little understand how can you abandon it, without throwing up the whole bill. It is the essence of the measure as now framed. Stript of this clause, the bill would go down to the House of Commons a sort of moral lecture, and would be to be fought through there by arguments precisely the opposite of those by which the Duke of York was saved in 1809. Our language then, I am sure mine was (and I remember I spoke at the *pinching* time of the debate, after Wilberforce had preached against immorality, and when it was my business, laying every other consideration aside, to save the vote)—our language, I say was, 'The 'crime, the crime—prove the substantive, tangible, cognizable, 'punishable crime. Else what has Parliament to do with 'the business?' Parliament is not, and never has been (God forbid it ever should be), a tribunal for taking cognizance of mere moral 'delinquency, however gross and indefensible, &c., &c.' This was the language in 1809, of the same Government which, in 1820, will (should the bill cease to be a divorce bill) have to plead, in the contrary direction, for parliamentary animadversion on fornication and concubinage. 'If Parliament once seats itself in the moral chair, and 'pronounces upon private delinquency, where will its inter-'meddling stop?' was a question asked by us over and over again in the debates of 1809. Will it not be said (if your bill ceases to be a divorce bill) that you are giving a tremendous illustration of your own forewarning?

But I hear that there is a notion of retaining the divorce clause, but nullifying its operation by a provision that neither party shall marry.

I confess to you that I think this expedient does not much mend the matter. In the first place, you retain with the clause all the debatable and conscientious difficulties; for the proviso is not necessary, and if the clause may pass with it, it might pass without it, and that is what I apprehend no person who really feels the religious objection will allow. But secondly, our royal master will, as it appears to me, be left worse in this way than in any other.

The proviso, though impartial in its language, is *in effect* directed against him only, forasmuch as the Act of Parliament *never* distinctly allows the woman to marry again. The proviso, therefore, will withhold that liberty only from the party to whom, without such proviso, it would be granted. And then what is the effect of the clause and proviso taken together? Why, that *she* deserves to be divorced; but that *he*, for some reason or other, does not deserve to be relieved. What can that reason be but one? and having (with Lord Grey's help) shut out recrimination in the process, you voluntarily propose to inflict the full penalty of the most successful recrimination in your act.

These are the difficulties originating from the introduction of the divorce clause, out of which, as I have said, I see no way; but either of which must prove fatal to the bill in the House of Commons, and all of which are so tempting for debate, that choose which you will, I almost think the Queen's partisans would rather prefer the bill's being entertained so far as to enable them to fling it out upon its merits, although the more general bias of the House of Commons would perhaps be to shut out the consideration of it altogether.

Such was, according to my view, the state of things before the defence was opened, and such it continues to be with whatever additional perplexity the course of the defence may have brought upon your case.

I have read the evidence (in the *Courier*) as far as Sir

William Gell's. His testimony is exactly what I told you all it would be, setting up Bergami, averring general propriety of conduct, and throwing a doubt upon all the stories of Naples. What may be the effect upon hearers, I cannot tell; but *readers here* certainly think the case for the prosecution shaken. If Dumont should be in any way further disparaged; if Sacchi can be, as Brougham engages, decisively contradicted; and if any discredit can be thrown upon the German housemaid, the case, as it appears to me, will be nearly demolished.

But far short of that demolition, there may be produced a situation of affairs so little clear and positive, so full of contradiction and uncertainty, that people, without appearing wilfully to shut their eyes to conviction, may reasonably enough decide either way. In such circumstances, do you believe that the bill would be carried even in the House of Lords? Do you think it ought to be carried? Can you imagine that, at all events, it would be carried by such a majority as to make the throwing it out in the House of Commons a matter of any delicacy or difficulty? If not, would it not be infinitely better, that it should be not thrown out, but withdrawn in the House of Lords?

Supposing the evidence for the prosecution to have remained in full force, I still think (as I have said) that the House of Commons would have thrown out the bill, with or without the divorce clause. But with the evidence coming down to them in a shattered state, Brougham and Co. will not be contented to throw the bill out, without previously and completely damning the evidence.

With the breach now made in it, if testimony not on oath be let in, what chance is there of their not effecting their purpose?

Then comes a difference between the two Houses, of a serious nature indeed; and then is the House of Lords left in a condition from which it will not be easy to redeem it. As to the Government, it may be—it probably is—true, that its fate is equally decided either way. But it is certain that it cannot survive a defeat in either House of Parliament; a

voluntary dereliction of the bill, on the avowed ground that the evidence has failed, it possibly might survive. Whether it would be wise or creditable to do so, is another question. I cannot figure to myself an existence more uncomfortable than that which will remain to it after any result, except that which is now out of the question—the carrying the bill through Parliament with a high hand; nor can I conceive anything less advantageous to the King, than that the Queen victorious should have to treat with those whom she has overcome. With them she will hear of no terms but *everything;* and I know not how they are to withhold anything from her.

With others she might compromise, perhaps, for what is, after all, the one thing essential to the peace of the kingdom — an establishment *abroad;* but even to that (though the object, I doubt not, of her own personal wishes) she would never consent at your suggestion or in treating with you.

Restoration to the Liturgy is a matter of course; but is it of course for you to advise it? 'Why not?' some of our colleagues may perhaps say; 'she was left out when accused, she is put in when acquitted; what more simple?' Perhaps so, but it is a simplicity the disgrace of which no Government could stand. *I* might agree to it with consistency; nay, I must consistently approve of it; and therefore I speak not for myself, but to the character of the Government; to its usefulness and authority, if not to its existence, I cannot imagine anything more fatal. But this by the way.

I assume in all that I have been lately saying, the failure of the evidence to such a degree as to leave the probabilities of guilt and innocence apparently balanced. Should it, on the contrary, remain so far unshaken in its main parts as to induce you still to be of opinion conscientiously, that *upon the evidence* the verdict ought to be 'guilty,' far be it from me to suggest to you to act against your conscience. But if the guilt is not made out irresistibly *by the evidence,* I do not think that any private natural conviction arising out of circumstances not before the world, can now be allowed to eke

out the effect of the evidence in any man's mind, and to operate upon his solemn judgment. It is only upon what has been charged and proved that you are now at liberty to decide. A public inquiry once instituted, the result must be, if not condemnation, acquittal, and acquittal with all its benefits; a point, I fear, not taken into due consideration by his Majesty's private advisers.

If such, then (as I have been assuming), is to be the result of the inquiry, almost certainly in the House of Commons (not improbably in the House of Lords), ought not you to be the first to foresee and to proclaim it? I think so. It seems to me the only course by which you can avoid being involved in the shame of a false accusation, and beyond a doubt the only one, by which (if that were any object) you could remain a Government, after so signal a discomfiture.

You (I mean *you* individually) could make such a declaration, if you thought it just and fitting, without discredit. The manner in which you have conducted yourself throughout the whole of this painful proceeding in the House of Lords, insures you that advantage; only, if you think it right to do this, do it (when once your mind is made up to the proposition) promptly and decidedly, and do not attempt previously to feel your way (as through Lord Lonsdale in the case of the divorce clause); and, above all things, do not let your press get before you and make the suggestion its own.

If, on the other hand, there shall remain, after the defence is closed, such a case still in evidence as compels you conscientiously to proceed for a condemnation, why, then, I have only to hope that my predictions (which were deemed, I believe, extravagant at the time when they were first uttered) of the madness to which these proceedings would stir up the people, the jeopardy in which they would place the Crown, and the bitter repentance which they would bring upon the King, may be no further accomplished than they have been up to the moment at which I am writing.

Adieu. Pray understand what I have written (which opens my whole mind to you upon this sad subject, so far as

I have the means of making it up at present) as addressed to you in your *individual*, not your corporate capacity.

Believe me, my dear Liverpool,

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

Oct. 12.

P.S.—Since this letter was written, a messenger from London has passed through this place, by whom some of the foreign Ministers have received accounts which alarm them exceedingly for the issue of the trial and the safety of the Government. Castelcicala has told me so in so many words. The D. de Richelieu does not own to having received anything from De Caze, but he is evidently much disquieted; and others (whom I met at dinner at Pozzo's yesterday) were clearly under similar impressions. Stuart did not receive any letters by the messenger; but some of his family, who saw the messenger, say, that he (Krause, I believe, by name) spoke of the trial as taking an unfavourable turn for the prosecution, and of a prevailing expectation that the Government would abandon it. If this be so, I have perhaps hardly anticipated the course of events by this letter. I send it, nevertheless, as it may not perhaps be indifferent to you to know the bearing of my opinions, though they may be of no use, and indeed have no claim to be weighed at all in this unhappy business.

There is, and there was even before the arrival of these accounts, but one opinion here among all classes that I have seen, native or foreign, as to the inexpediency, the disgrace, and the danger of the proceeding; and that opinion, I must own, has been loudly pronounced wherever on the Continent I have heard the subject brought into conversation.

Castelcicala, at the same time that he mentioned to me the accounts from London, yesterday showed me a letter from the King of Naples, the contents of which I have by his (Castelcicala's) desire repeated to Castlereagh, to be communicated to you and to our royal master.

As you will see my letter to Castlereagh, I need not

repeat it here; but one point in it connects with the subject of *this* letter too disastrously not to force itself upon my pen. The King of Naples says to Castelcicala, '*On me ménace d'un procés.*' You and I remember the effect produced in England by the *procés* against Louis XVI. We remember that it was the one point among all the horrors of those times in which there was, or professed to be, but one general sentiment, on which the Opposition contended with the Government which should be foremost in condemnation; but *then* there had been no royal *procés* since Charles I. Then all the general topics which are calculated to influence men's minds—the sanctity of a throne invaded, royalty degraded, monarchy brought into jeopardy—all were at our service and in our employ. How many of these general topics can we venture upon now?

In reasoning, a distinction may be shown, but will it be admitted in feeling?

If yours had been a suit of husband against wife, indeed there would not only have been a *distinction*, but a *difference*. But so it is with '*The State*;' for the adverse party the similarity is too near. *The State* complains of the Queen's misconduct, which makes her unfit, &c. &c. 'Eh bien,' will the Jacobins say; 'the State complains of the King's misconduct, which makes him unfit,' &c. And can the Government which prosecuted the Queen grapple successfully with this argument?

In this same way, I fear, these unfortunate proceedings will meet you at every turn, on many a subject not foreseen, and will be mixed up with a hundred questions of internal and external policy.

But this is but an useless reflection, and therefore I will have done.

I reckon that by remaining here next week, I may be pretty sure of hearing the result of the House of Lords, before I set out, and may further have a chance of finding you at Walmer.

Adieu. G. C.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR HUSKISSON, Paris, Oct. 22, 1820.

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of Friday, and very glad that I have time to acknowledge it by the return of the messenger.

As you do not mention any conversation with Lord L. upon the subject of my letter to him, and as (what I cannot be at all surprised at) I have not heard from him since he received it, I have no means of judging what impression it may have made upon his mind; but I am every day more satisfied with myself for having written it, and written it when I did, before the cry for the quashing of the proceedings had become, as it appears to be becoming every day, loud and general among the friends of Government.

Of the three ways out of the present difficulty which you describe as being in contemplation—

The first—that of forcing the bill through the House of Lords, to be lost in the House of Commons, would be desperate, if it were practicable. It would lose the House of Lords for ever (or for our time most assuredly) with the country; and it would naturally and justifiably exasperate the friends of Government in that House against the Ministers (individually and collectively) and against the King, to such a degree, as not only to throw out the Administration with disgrace, but to lay them and the Crown at the mercy of their enemies.

The second—that of passing a resolution that the preamble is proved, and then dropping the bill upon considerations of expediency—has this objection to it in principle, that it would be flagrantly *unjust* (which ought to prevent its being carried); and this further objection in policy, that (if carried in the House of Lords) it would only adjourn the evil day of defeat in the House of Commons. It is quite impossible, in my opinion, that the House of Commons could acquiesce in that mode of disposing of the matter. If the bill were to be *thrown out* in the House of Lords, that would be admitted as satisfaction to the Queen: but how

can any one imagine that her friends should be contented with a verdict of guilty, not ventured to be followed up by any sentence? They would, of course—they must, in consistency with all that they have asserted—deny the justice of the condemnation. The very forbearance of the court which had passed it, would furnish a *primâ facie* argument in support of that denial. And thus the whole question would be dragged into the House of Commons, the Queen's friends claiming instead of deprecating the discussion.

The motion for an allowance, whenever made, would naturally open the whole question, even if it were not brought forward in a substantive shape. Or the restoration to the Liturgy would be at once assumed, as the necessary consequence of the dropping of the bill, and Government would have only the option of yielding that point, in the face of the criminatory decision of the House of Lords, that those acts, on the allegation of which the Queen's name had been excluded, were proved—or of resisting it at the expense of beginning the whole subject over again.

The last of these objections—perhaps, indeed, the whole of them—apply, though in a mitigated degree, to the third mode which you and Granville have suggested—I admit in a very mitigated degree—but they do apply. The injustice would be much less flagrant in dismissing the penal part of the measure first, and then lecturing the culprit, than in condemning *in toto*, and then (for reasons of convenience) suspending execution. But would not the practical difficulties, as with respect to the House of Commons, be nearly the same? Would not the triumph over the Government in the House of Lords, though not complete, be so great as to invite irresistibly an attempt to bring it to completion in the House of Commons? Would not the question of allowance be quite as open as in the other case? In short, having, in an evil hour, brought the charges against the Queen to the test of a judicial trial, has she not a right to a condemnation or acquittal? In a court of inferior jurisdiction, the answer would not admit of a doubt. No man could maintain for a moment that the prosecutor, or the judge with the concurrence

of the prosecutor, could, of their own accord, withdraw the criminal consequences, and fix, at the same time, the moral taint upon the accused. The moral may, and in this case probably will, remain in the opinion of the world, in spite of legal acquittal; but legal acquittal, with all its legal consequences, the Queen, I apprehend, like all other accused persons, must have, if she does not incur legal condemnation. The attempt to compromise for anything short of this, I fear will only lead to new difficulties and embarrassments. Such a compromise may be more palatable than the total abandoning of the object so long and so eagerly pursued. But that consideration comes now too late; it ought to have prevented the commencement of a judicial proceeding. A legal process must have a legal issue. Else the whole question would be liable, and likely to be entered upon anew, starting only from the ground conceded to the accused, but not resting while an inch of ground remains to be gained to her.

I know well how mortifying, how painful, how (to speak too plainly) discrediting such a sacrifice of the whole object must be felt to be: but I am intimately convinced that to keep anything back (supposing anything conceded) will only insure discredit, both in the attempt and in the failure—a prolongation of pain, and mortifications more numerous and more galling.

If this be the course ultimately pursued, only let this prediction of mine be remembered among others on the same subject, of which, however extravagant they may have been thought when uttered, the event alone can ascertain the validity.

I think, *if* the bill is to be given up, it must be given up *in toto* in the House of Lords, and by Liverpool himself.

The defence of Government for having brought it forward, will, in my opinion, come with infinitely better grace, with infinitely more effect, in answer to an attack from the Opposition, than it can do in any qualified apology put into the mouth of a friend. Such an attack will, I have no doubt, be menaced in the debate which will arise upon the abandonment of the bill. I see no objection to its being challenged

in that debate, upon any expression of sauciness or triumph from the Opposition; and if menaced and defied, and afterwards retreated from (as I think it would be), I see no objection to the Government then saying, that *after the menace*, it is impossible to let the matter rest there, and that they call for the judgment of the House upon their conduct; and then avowedly inviting a motion upon which that judgment may be taken. But I am strongly averse from any unavowed contrivance by which a friend—be his independence what you will (and recollect with a coronation in prospect, no peer will be admitted to be independent who is not already a Duke, a Lord Lieutenant, and a Garter)—should come forward, half of his own motion, and half from the suggestions of others. The crisis is too big for such tactics. Nothing but plain management, or rather absence of all management, will suit it; and happily Liverpool stands in a situation in which *his own* word will carry him through. But I set the greatest importance on whatever is done being done straightforward, and originating with *himself*.

Let me remark, by the way, that the peer you mentioned, and the one suggested by Granville, are each in my mind very objectionable. Yours would not do well what requires the nicest execution. He is besides suspected (I am sure I know not how justly, but I know he *is* suspected) of looking to a higher honour. For his own sake, therefore, I should be sorry that a task should be imposed upon him which must at once confirm that suspicion, and deprive him of the object of his desire, if he really entertains it. The other peer was, in the House of Commons, the very worst enemy (in my humble judgment) of the present Administration. His language upon this particular subject has been from the beginning, not only unfriendly, but condemnatory. He never opened his mouth in defence of Ministers in the House of Commons, that he did not qualify that defence with exceptions or admissions that made it more mischievous than helpful. In the House of Commons the Government could not avoid the evil, because he was *there* a leviathan from property and station. But in the House to which he

is now gone, he is not necessarily of such a size; and I should think the greatest possible error in personal politics to make him so. But this by the way.

The course which I recommend as the straightforward course, once taken, it matters not who is the mere mover of a proposition publicly *challenged.* This course, and this alone, will restore to the Government an advantage which, I recollect, was thought and stated as essential in all our discussions of February last (though it was afterwards altogether lost sight of), that any inculpation of the Queen should proceed from the false movement of her own friends. Giving up the bill frankly, on the mixed considerations on which it would be given up according to this course, the Queen's moral guilt would not be formally negatived, though she would have the legal benefits of the general acquittal. But, on the other hand, it would only be affirmed, if the Opposition made a charge upon the Government, in refutation of which the House must necessarily affirm it.

One more consideration I will mention, and then have done. I quite agree with you as to the expediency of a prorogation to the end of January (whether the interval be to be employed in framing a new Administration, or in endeavouring to make this stand). BUT, I am strongly of opinion, that such advice can be given only if the Queen's bill be entirely put an end to by a *legal acquittal,* with (as I have said before) all *its legal consequences;* and that to prorogue Parliament, after a slur thrown by the House of Lords upon the Queen extra-judicially, unnecessarily, and unprovokedly, would earn and merit an *impeachment* by the House of Commons.

You will judge from the size of my paper, that I had no intention when I began of entering into so long a dissertation. I meant to do little more than to acknowledge your letter.

I must not, however, altogether omit to notice the other part of it.

* * * *

I am not at all surprised at what you tell me of Bennett

or Lord J. Russell. Hunie's silence on Tuesday does surprise me, and looks, I think, more like a plot than anything that he could have uttered.

I doubted about writing to Liverpool to-day; but the time that I have consumed in writing to you resolves that doubt—for I could not now write to him without detaining the messenger.

If you think this letter worth his perusal (which must depend upon the state of things at the time when it reaches you), I have no difficulty in allowing you to communicate it to him.

Perhaps, after all, it may be a less unpleasant mode of conveying my opinions than the obtruding them directly upon himself, at a moment when they might possibly rather embarrass than assist him.

I think, however, that I shall write to him by the next messenger.

The point upon which I am anxious that he should know what I think, is that of the proposed resolution affirming the preamble to have been proved; the rather, because I learn from Sir C. Stuart, that the notion of such an escape from the bill is very general in London; and I met with it among the Ministers here before I received your letter. It seems to strike some of them as an admirable expedient for obtaining the main object of the bill, without making a defeat upon it. But if such be (and it is) the character of the expedient, surely the adversaries of the measure will be as clear-sighted as its friends. Adieu.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

P.S.—On reading over my letter I see that I have taken for granted throughout that the bill is not to be passed, I mean that it CANNOT be passed through the House of Commons, and that the only question is how to get out of it. Such certainly is my own opinion, and it is confirmed certainly by all I hear from London.

If this opinion be erroneous, there *is* undoubtedly an alternative which I have not argued. But what I am most

desirous to express as my opinion, is that there is *only* the alternative between carrying the bill *altogether*, or losing it altogether: that middle courses will be found delusive and dangerous.

The second reading of the bill was carried on the 10th of November in the House of Lords by the small majority of 9, upon which Lord Liverpool withdrew it.

In our journey to Ickworth, Mr. Canning observed with earnestness:—

I would have forfeited my life, if I had been the Queen's Attorney-General, if I had not compelled the Government to withdraw the bill, simply by my opening speech. I would have read a list of witnesses which alone would have produced this result. But Mr. Brougham allowed himself to be hampered by his friends in opposition.

Further, he expressed a very strong opinion that Mr. Brougham made a very great mistake on behalf of his client, in consenting to carry on the defence after the witness Restelli was not forthcoming. Mr. Canning said: 'If the defence had then closed, not a peer could have voted for the bill.' He thought the Government had got out of it better than he expected.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. CANNING'S RESIGNATION AFTER THE QUEEN'S TRIAL—HE ACCEPTS THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

WHEN the Queen's trial was over, Mr. Canning returned to England.

He then determined to resign. The following letters state his reasons for the step.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

India Board, Dec. 11, 1820.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I send you my papers to be forwarded when you have read them. After much consideration I have determined to strike out entirely everything that could be looked upon as controversial, and have confined myself (in the note to my colleagues) to a simple statement of motive, and declaration of goodwill.

That to the K. I have made *a letter*, finding the third person, when so often repeated, harsh and pedantic.

I have only to hope that both will be received in the spirit in which they are written.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

P.S.—I shall send my letter to Carlton House to-morrow.

India Board, Dec. 11, 1820.

Mr. Canning thinks it due to his colleagues to circulate for their perusal the copy of a letter to the King.

The state of things to which his Majesty's gracious com-

mands, received by Mr. Canning in the month of June, were applicable, no longer existing, he has now no alternative, consistent with his original resolution to take no part in the proceedings against the Queen, than that which is contained in the accompanying letter. But in resorting to that alternative he is most anxious to impress upon his colleagues the assurance, that he acts solely from a sense of the increased difficulty of his own personal position, and of the inconveniences which his continuance in office under that increased difficulty must entail upon his colleagues, as well as upon himself.

He cannot refrain from further assuring them that he separates from them with unfeigned reluctance, that he bears to them collectively and individually the sincerest goodwill, and that it is a deep mortification to him that one unfortunate question should, from circumstances over which he has no control, prevent him at a moment like the present from continuing to take his full share in upholding, in conjunction with them, those general principles of policy, internal and external, upon which they have been acting cordially together.

It is Mr. Canning's intention to return to the Continent as soon as he has wound up the business of his office, and not to be in England during the agitation of this unhappy question, unless in circumstances quite unforeseen, or specifically the vindication of his own conduct should require his presence in the House of Commons.

SIR, India Board Office, Dec. 12, 1820.

According to your Majesty's gracious permission, I now take the liberty of humbly addressing myself to your Majesty on the subject which your Majesty was so good as to allow me to open to you when last I had the honour of an audience. Although I am bound to confess that Lord Liverpool, with whom I have in the interval had the fullest communication upon the subject, does not appear to be convinced of the necessity of the step which I am taking, I must also say

that discussion and reflection have tended to confirm me in the opinion which I have already submitted to your Majesty.

When, in the month of June, I presumed humbly to represent to your Majesty the impossibility of my taking any part in the proceedings against the Queen, and in consequence laid at your Majesty's feet the tender of my resignation, your Majesty had the goodness and condescension to command me to continue in your service, abstaining from any share in those proceedings. And your Majesty was farther pleased to grant me full authority to plead your Majesty's express commands for so continuing in office.

That authority I have not abused. And I have persevered in obedience to your Majesty's commands (the generosity of which I can never sufficiently acknowledge) until a state of things has arisen to which they cannot be considered as applying.

The proceeding in the House of Commons, which was then in contemplation when your Majesty's commands were laid upon me, was one which would have been conducted (as that in the House of Lords) apart from all other matters. The absenting myself from that separate proceeding would have required no other explanation than that which your Majesty had so indulgently authorized me to furnish: nor need such partial absence from the House of Commons have created any embarrassment in the general conduct of parliamentary business.

But the discussions respecting the Queen, which may now be expected in the House of Commons, will be so much intermixed with the general business of the session, that a Minister could not absent himself from them without appearing virtually to abandon the parliamentary duties of his station. On the other hand, to be present, as a Minister, taking no part in the discussions, must produce not only the most painful embarrassment to himself, but the greatest perplexity to his colleagues, and the utmost disadvantage to the conduct of your Majesty's affairs.

From these difficulties, Sir, I see no remedy, except in the renewal to your Majesty of my humble, but earnest, request

that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to approve of my retiring from the situation which I have now the honour to hold in your Majesty's Government. Entreating your Majesty to believe that I shall carry with me out of office an unabated zeal for the prosperity of your Majesty's reign, and an unalterable sense of gratitude for the kindness which I have uniformly experienced at your Majesty's hands from the moment of my entrance into your service. I am, with profound veneration and attachment,

Your Majesty's

Most dutiful and most obedient Subject and Servant,

GEORGE CANNING.

The King receives with regret, but not with surprise, Mr. Canning's letter, tendering his resignation.

The King feels, as he should do, the loss of a servant, whose great talents rendered him so very useful to the Government, and the country.

CARLTON HOUSE, Dec. 13, 1820.

(Private.)

MY DEAR SIR, Whitehall, Dec. 12, 1820.

You must allow me to express my extreme regret at your determination, though I dare not take the liberty of remonstrating against it.

The loss to the King's service and to your colleagues will be irreparable; and let me add that I shall feel it deeply: for your kind, cordial, and honourable conduct has made a strong and lasting impression on my mind.

I shall ever remain,

My dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

SIDMOUTH.

Right Hon. George Canning.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR CANNING, Foreign Office, Dec. 19, 1820.

As I understand you leave town early to-morrow, and I may not have the pleasure of seeing you, I take this mode (having failed of finding you at the India Board, when I called) to express the very great personal regret with which I read your letter to your colleagues, announcing your retirement from office at this important conjuncture.

The unanimity of sentiment which has prevailed in the Cabinet upon our general policy, internal and external, makes it additionally painful that a single question should have led to a result so prejudicial as your leaving the Government must be, under any circumstances, to the public service. I cannot presume for a moment to question the solidity of the grounds upon which your sense of public duty has led you to decide this question in the sense which will deprive us of your valuable and important assistance; but as the individual member of the Government who must feel your loss the most seriously, both in the House of Commons and in the business of the Foreign Office, I will not refrain from expressing my disappointment. Allow me at the same time most cordially to thank you for the uniform attention with which you have followed up, and the kindness with which you have assisted me, in the business of the department for the conduct of which I am more immediately responsible.

Believe me, dear Canning,

Ever faithfully yours,

CASTLEREAGH.

SIR, East India House, Dec. 22, 1820.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company have unanimously requested us to convey to you the expression of this their regret at your retirement from the high public station of President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India: and at the same time to testify to you the sincere respect with which they have been impressed by the

able, upright, and conciliatory manner in which you have discharged the duties of that station.

The functions of the Right Honourable Board over which you have presided for a period of nearly five years, have been exercised with so much candour and courtesy, as well as with such invariable attention to the interests both of the public and the Company, that they have been almost entirely divested of the invidious character which must ever, in some degree, attach to a controlling Board.

We reflect with peculiar gratification that under your auspices the Company's servants have been selected by the Court of Directors for the distinguished appointments of Governors of two of the principal settlements in India; and have been cheerfully recommended by you to his Majesty for his gracious approbation.

Whilst we assure you, in the name of the Court, that you carry with you their sincerest wishes for every possible happiness, we desire individually to offer you our best acknowledgments for the attention and urbanity which we have uniformly experienced in the course of the communications which we have had the honour to hold with you, and which have been equally felt and acknowledged by our predecessors in the chairs.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servants,
G. A. ROBINSON, Chairman,
T. REED, Deputy Chairman.

The Right Hon. George Canning.

GENTLEMEN, Tuddenham (Norfolk) Dec. 25, 1820.

I have received, with a satisfaction which I cannot adequately express, the letter which you did me the honour to address to me on the 22nd instant.

I beg of you to say for me to the Court of Directors, how sensible I am of their kindness and how proud I am of their testimony.

The office which has placed me in relation with that body is one of which, as you justly observe, the functions are necessarily of a somewhat invidious character.

It would be presumptuous to arraign the wisdom of an institution, in the formation of which (with some slight changes and modifications) so many of the greatest politicians of our country in the present age, have substantially concurred.

But the fact is not the less true, that the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India exhibits perhaps the single instance of an authority, the power belonging to which is simply corrective, coercive, and repressive. Partaking in no degree of any of those attributes by which the exercise of harsh duties is in other instances softened and compensated; a power which may reduce or abolish establishments, but cannot create or extend them; may negative appointments, but cannot nominate to them; may check or stint the flow of beneficence, but cannot originate or suggest a single act of grace or favour.

To have administered for near five years such a power—not sacrificing (as I hope) any of its duties, however disagreeable, to a fear of collision—and yet, without incurring odium, would have been no small cause of self-congratulation.

The letter which I have had the gratification to receive from you, carries that feeling much higher; and makes me reflect upon the years which I have passed in the administration of your affairs, as upon the period of my public life by which I shall be most anxious to be remembered.

My concurrence in the appointment of two of your most distinguished servants to the Governments of Bombay and of Madras, is among the acts of that administration upon which I look back with the greatest complacency. I do not think, indeed, that the example of those appointments ought to pass into a rule. They are justifiable exceptions to a rule generally salutary.

I can hardly conceive the case in which it would be expedient that the *highest* office of your Government in India should be filled otherwise than from England. That main

link at least between the systems of the Indian and British Governments ought, for the advantage of both (in my judgment) to be invariably maintained. But, under the peculiar circumstances of British India, at the time when Mr. Elphinstone first, and afterwards General Munro, were selected for their respective destinations, I am satisfied that every consideration of British, as well as Indian policy, was best consulted by those selections.

It is at least a presumption of my sincerity in this conviction, that I had no acquaintance with either of these gentlemen, except through the medium of their services.

It is a further satisfaction to me that, with the exception of these two appointments, to which the law made my concurrence necessary, I can truly say with respect to any nominations in your service, of whatever description, abroad or at home, I have never exercised any sort of interference; much less have ever urged any personal wish, or asked any personal favour.

This declaration I might not have thought necessary, had I not been informed that the contrary conduct has been most unaccountably imputed to me, in some late discussion in your Court of Proprietors.

I am happy in addressing my denial of such an imputation to those who have the best means of estimating the truth of that denial.

I take leave of you, Gentlemen, and of the Court of Directors, with the sincerest wishes for the prosperity of the great Empire committed to their charge, in the welfare of which I shall never cease, even in a private station, to take the deepest interest: and with a lasting sense of the candour and cordiality which have uniformly prevailed in my intercourse with all those members of your body with whom I have been brought immediately in contact.

To you, Gentlemen, who are the organs of the Court upon the present occasion, I am very desirous of repeating my farewell in person: and (if the new Commission should not be issued before I return to town next week) I shall be glad to see you for that purpose at the India Board, on

Tuesday or Thursday morning, the 2nd or 4th of January, as may best suit your convenience.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.,

GEORGE CANNING.

Notwithstanding the courteous and dignified answer of the King to Mr. Canning's letter tendering his resignation, his Majesty was in his heart grievously offended with him. But the main cause of the King's displeasure was not at the course which he had himself adopted—with *that* his Majesty was little displeased; but it happened that his personal friends in the House of Lords, though in general supporters of Lord Liverpool's Government, had taken a very active part against the bill.

They took this course because they believed it to be the right one; for Mr. Canning, loyally faithful to the line which he had marked out for himself, in no way whatever sought to influence their judicial conduct.

This, however, was not the impression made on the King's mind; he attributed the part which they took to his advice, and the consequence was that his Majesty made the strongest opposition to his re-admission into the Cabinet, when (after the death of the Queen in August, 1821) Lord Liverpool urged it on his Majesty. This opposition led Mr. Canning to turn his mind in another direction; and from the knowledge which he had necessarily obtained of Indian affairs, as President of the Board of Control, and the interest which he had acquired in them, the post of Governor-General had great attractions for him. The history of what passed in the

early stages of the negotiations for this arrangement is contained in the following letter.

MY DEAR MORLEY, Trentham, December 12, 1821.

I do not wonder that you should still feel some of that uncertainty on particular points which I trace in your letter, and which Charles Ellis reports you to me, as having disclosed in your conference with him.

Instead of solving specific difficulties, the best way will be to give you a short general view of the whole matter, from which you may collect solutions for yourself.

1. In June last there was a contest between Liverpool and the King, for and against my readmission into office. I then begged not to be pressed upon the King, as you know. I was so far taken at my word that the pressure was dropped, for the time, to be renewed on the King's return from Ireland.

2. On his Majesty's return from Ireland, he expressly forbad Liverpool to open the subject, and it was adjourned till the return from Hanover.

3. Soon after the King's departure for Hanover, the chairman of the Court of Directors communicated to me a letter from Lord Hastings, implying in the clearest manner his (Lord H.'s) wish to hear that a successor to him had been appointed, and announcing his intended return to Europe. The chairman wished to propose me, and requested me to transmit Lord Hastings' letter, and his (the chairman's) answer to it, to Lord Liverpool, who was then at Walmer, in order that he might take such steps as he might think proper with the King.

I transmitted the papers accordingly, and I consented to be named—subject, of course, to the King's being prepared to approve the nomination.

One main motive with me for so consenting, and so stated by me to Liverpool, and I suppose by him to the King, was the solution which this appointment would afford to the difficulties otherwise to be encountered again on the King's return, about my return to office.

4. Not many days after this communication from the chairman of the Court of Directors, and my transmission of it to Liverpool, Colonel Doyle, Lord Hastings' most confidential

friend and agent, called on the chairman (whom he did not personally know), to say, that he understood there was question of appointing a successor to Lord Hastings; that if the Court meant to recall him, he had nothing to say; but that, if they were acting on a notion that Lord Hastings was desirous of returning, they were altogether mistaken—that Lord Hastings had no such intention, no such wish—that his letters to the Court might breathe dissatisfaction and displeasure, because he did think himself hardly treated, his services not sufficiently prized, his plans improperly thwarted, &c.; but that, whatever he might have written on those grounds, and in this temper, that looked like a desire to come home, there was nothing serious in it; he was merely giving way to his vexation, but, in truth, he wished to remain, and would do so *unless recalled*; and, he added, that he himself had received a *resignation* from Lord Hastings some months ago to be presented to the Court of Directors, but that, well knowing it to have been framed on an erroneous view of his situation with the Court and the Government and *me*, he, Colonel Doyle, had taken upon himself to hold it back, and had written (long ago) to Lord Hastings to account for his doing so.

5. Here was an end of the vacancy, which, however, had been announced to the King.

6. The King had *jumped at* the solution of difficulties which was opened to him, by the appointment to India.

7. His Majesty undertook to do anything in his power to make Lord Hastings' resignation easy to him; and he determined, on his return to England, to see Colonel Doyle himself, and to learn whether the resignation so sent to him (as has been described) might not now be made available.

8. I understand his Majesty to have said at the same time, that, if he could not succeed in opening India, he would wave his objection to the arrangement proposed in June.

9. In this state things were when I saw Lord Liverpool after the King's return from Hanover.

10. Of other office I had nothing to say, for nothing was said to me in the way of proposal. But, as to India, I positively refused to act upon Colonel Doyle's *old* resignation,

which he had himself discredited and put by; and after a deal of argumentation and discussion, I found he had no other to produce: he was only led by the King to take a different view of the expediency of using the old one. To act upon this, it appeared to me, was to substitute Colonel Doyle's discretion for Lord Hastings' deliberate intention.

11. In spite of my remonstrances, however, the King went on, and Doyle's resignation was sent in to the Court of Directors. There, to my great relief, it was met by a clause in an Act of Parliament (the Charter Act of 1793), which, if I had luckily known of it before, would have saved me a world of trouble in reasoning—which clause prescribes the form in which a resignation shall be given, and declares none other to be valid, or legal. It is unnecessary to add that Colonel Doyle's is not in that form.

12. Here, therefore, there is really and substantially (as there was before morally) an insurmountable impediment to a new nomination at present, and my reasoning and feeling receive the sanction of law.

13. While these discussions have been going on, and before the conclusive discovery of the Act of Parliament, the arrangements at home have been made.

14. It is no longer, therefore, in the King's power to fulfil (if he were disposed to do so) his eventual holding out of office in case of the failure of his attempt to open India.

15. It will not escape you that the alternative of office, *or* India, has never been proposed to me.

These are the facts. I make no comment, and wish no comment to be made upon them. It is true that India was *my own* preference; but it is hardly fair not to add that in that preference one main ingredient was to save to the Government (or to Liverpool at least) the struggle for my readmission.

And *if* it is true that there was a great wish to have me in office at home, *rather than* India, it is hardly fair not to add that that wish was never so expressed to me as to enable me to act upon it.

I had written the preceding sheets when I received your

letter of yesterday. You will gather from them that, if Government is not making a case against me, I have on my part no desire to make one against them. I am quite contented to let the facts stand simply as they are. That I have declined India, which, however, was not vacant, and that there has been no other proposal made to me, either concurrently with India, or since its failure. The last, I presume, everybody will attribute (as I do in my own mind) not to the ill-disposition of the Government, but to the unaltered resentment of the King.

I think as you do—and as you say the world will—of the preference of C. W. W.* to H.† But I shall not *express* any dissatisfaction even on that ground, because I do not wish to raise the question of Huskisson's retirement—which he is himself in a temper to precipitate—but on which I think the public (though sensible of his ill-usage) would not go with him. I have no objection to the world's taking his part.

We go to-morrow to London; Monday to Teddesly, and return here this day se'nnight for a couple of days, in our way back to Welbeck.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

The arrangements referred to in paragraph 13 of the above letter, were the acceptance by Mr. Peel (who had been out of office during the whole time of the Queen's business) of the office of Home Secretary, vacated by the retirement of Lord Sidmouth; and the alliance formed by the Cabinet with the Grenville party, who had for some time been taking a line independent both of Whigs and Tories. Lord Grenville himself had given up all thoughts of office, and was living in complete retirement. But the head of the Grenville family, the Marquis of

* Mr. Wynn. † Huskisson.

Buckingham, was created a duke—his relative, Mr. Charles Williams Wynn, was made President of the Board of Control; and two others, members of his party, Mr. Fremantle and Dr. Phillimore, were made Commissioners at the same Board. A change also took place in the construction of the Irish Government. Lord Wellesley was appointed Lord-Lieutenant, and Mr. Plunket* Attorney-General. These appointments added considerable strength to Lord Liverpool's Government; for Lord Wellesley was a statesman of a truly comprehensive grasp of intellect, and Mr. Plunket's great abilities and oratorical powers were of the highest order. Of all the celebrated men who have addressed the House of Commons, it may be justly said that his speeches were the most powerful. It was not by flights of oratory or eloquent language that he impressed his hearers, but that he built up his arguments with such wonderful logical accuracy, and with such clearness and simplicity of diction, that he forced conviction even on his opponents. At the beginning of his speeches, a person, who heard him for the first time, might look round with amazement, and ask, 'Is this *the* Mr. Plunket of whom I have heard so much?' but gradually, as the speech went on, the listener began to discover that it was indeed a first-rate orator, who was addressing them. His speech in defence of some proceedings in Ireland, on the 15th of April, 1823, is thus described by Mr. Charles Wynn, who heard it:—

He addressed a House evidently unfavourably disposed to

* Afterwards Lord Plunket.

him, and for the first hour we could scarcely raise a decent cheer to encourage him.

Only conceive, one whole hour before even his friends could cheer him!

However, it *then* became evident [adds Mr. Wynn] that he was making progress, and he proceeded till the applause fairly rang from every part of the House; and his adversaries, who had every reason to expect a majority, found it impossible even to venture on a division.*

Mr. Peel being Home Secretary, Mr. Goulburn (an uncompromising opponent of the Roman Catholic claims) was appointed Chief Secretary. Many thought that these simultaneous appointments indicated a system of mutual check, which augured ill for mutual co-operation: but the view taken by Lord Wellesley of the policy which he ought to carry out, as Lord-Lieutenant, was the wiser one. He thus sets it forth in a letter to Lord Buckingham:—†

With regard to the settlement of the Roman Catholic grievances, my general opinions are unalterable; but the course to be pursued by the executive Government in Ireland in the existing state of the law, and in the present condition of that country, must be regulated by practical considerations, in which persons may cordially concur, whose sentiments may greatly differ on the great and final question. My view of the present state of affairs in Ireland would lead me to think that an impartial, equitable, and mild administration of the law (of which the alteration cannot be effected, or attempted by a Lord-Lieutenant) is the only safe course which can now be pursued, and the only channel through which we can ever reach a happy and permanent settlement.

---

* *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.*, by the Duke of Buckingham, vol. i. p. 450.

† Ibid. p. 238.

With this view, I entertain no apprehension of interruption in my government from the influence mentioned by your lordship as the subject of alarm in some most respectable minds . . . . and I trust that, by general consent, the system of government is abolished by which the laws respecting the Catholics were administered in a spirit much more severe than their letter. This is a step towards more substantial improvement, and every step in this salutary career must advance us still more near to the complete attainment of general union and harmony.

In these wise and statesmanlike principles Mr. Canning and Mr. Peel cordially concurred. During the unusually long period of his Lord-Lieutenancy, Lord Wellesley greatly improved the condition of Ireland: at any rate, as much as the vigorous and impartial execution of the laws, as they stood, was capable of improving a people torn by intestine strife, with upwards of two millions of the population in a chronic state of destitution. This wretched mass of human beings were the ever-ready instruments for mischief in the hands of a priesthood—an essential element of whose faith and duty is unextinguishable hatred to a Government, stained, in their eyes, with the unpardonable sin of heresy in its worst and most offensive form.

The best proof of Lord Wellesley's success in governing Ireland was the withdrawal of so many counties from the coercion of the Insurrection Act under which they laboured, when he first entered office.

The Ministerial arrangements, above described, materially diminished Mr. Canning's prospect of office. His mind reverted to the great field of action which the Government of India opened, and his friends,

and the public in general, learnt without surprise, but not without deep regret, that, at that crisis, the most generous and most talented of British statesmen was shortly to quit the Parliamentary arena, and to labour for his country's good in another hemisphere.

It was evidently not without feelings of disappointment that Mr. Canning first brought his mind to look to India as the country to which he was for, at any rate, the best remaining portion of his life to devote himself; but it was his nature, when once he had taken his decision, to throw all his energies into the task which he had undertaken: till, by degrees, as his interest warmed in what was at first uncongenial, he grew to like whatever mainly occupied his thoughts. Thus it was with the prospect of India. His mind had fastened upon the future career which was before him, till he not only got reconciled to it, but grew to prefer it to any other which might open to him.

In the summer of 1822, he accepted the appointment of Governor-General, and he passed the remainder of the season in taking leave of his friends, and making preparations for his departure.

CHAPTER XXI.

LIVERPOOL ELECTIONS—REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.

IN this volume the chronological order of events has been, more or less, put aside, for the purpose of dealing uninterruptedly with the different great political questions, which agitated the world during Mr. Canning's life.

This makes it necessary now to go back to 1812, in the course of which year he became the representative of Liverpool. It was to his constituents in that borough that his most important speeches on Parliamentary Reform were addressed.

The enthusiastic admiration with which he inspired those constituents, and the respect and veneration in which they held him, were, as he himself said, the one 'compensation for the vexation and annoyance' which he had experienced during the preceding years of his life.

It was at the general election in the autumn of 1812, that an unlooked-for invitation from the electors reached him in Devonshire. He at once accepted it, telling, however, those from whom it came, that 'his 'conduct in Parliament would always be governed by 'the best judgment which he was able to form of 'what should be conducive to the welfare, or essen-'tial to the honour of the country.' His opponents

at this first election were two Whigs, Mr. Brougham and Mr. Creevy. The contest was carried on remarkably free from personal acrimony, and when, towards the close, Mr. Canning's success was certain, he bore willing testimony to the fact that, 'through the whole 'course of the contest the conduct of his antagonists 'had been unexceptionable and gentlemanlike, and 'that it had been carried on without demonstrations 'of any of those feelings, which add bitterness to con-'flict and humiliation to discomfiture.'

Many years after this contest, in May, 1827, Mr. Brougham was his guest at dinner, for the first time in his life; Mr. Canning, passing through the dining-room (the cloth being laid), and seeing, for the centre ornament of the table, the magnificent piece of plate which had been given to him by his Liverpool constituents, ordered it to be removed, lest by allowing it to remain, it should appear to his intended guest to wear even the 'semblance of triumph.'

In 1816, after his return from Lisbon, having, by his acceptance of office, vacated his seat, it necessitated another election. On this occasion he was again returned by a triumphant majority, but not without opposition. Every effort was made to calumniate him, on account of his Lisbon embassy. He thus writes after the election was over:—

My cousin communicated to you the result of the election; but I am not sure whether he wrote to you before or after the chairing, which outdid all former outdoings in magnificence and concourse of attendance. The immensity of the multitude was really tremendous, and I am afraid the pressure must have been dreadful to those who were in it, but all was perfect order, and perfect and cordial good-will.

I cannot understand the tactics of my adversaries, unless

they really expected to throw me out, in which case they ought to have sent down a candidate. Their policy would, I think, have been to let the election pass over as quietly and quickly, and consequently as flatly, as possible. Their opposition, and more especially their abuse, only served to call forth demonstrations in my favour, which, unprovoked, would have been unnecessary, and, therefore, ridiculous. I had positively declined the chairing, when the contest was thought to be given up amicably. If the Whigs get anything that they don't like, they must thank their oracle for it.

In 1818, on the dissolution of Parliament, he was again returned for Liverpool, after a contest which was marked by circumstances unexampled in the annals of electioneering. There were three real candidates—Mr. Canning, General Gascoyne, and Lord Sefton; but, in order to poll the freemen more rapidly, and to give to Lord Sefton a higher place in the poll, a second bar was opened for a sham candidate, Mr. Heyward. His lordship's opponents, in order to defeat this trick, did the same, till at last there were eighteen sham candidates, who, with the three real ones, amounted to the unheard-of number of twenty-one. The confusion became, however, so great that the nominal candidates mutually agreed to withdraw, and the election resulted in Mr. Canning's return by a large majority.

At the dissolution consequent on the death of George III., Mr. Canning was returned for the last time for Liverpool; he retired from the representation when he accepted the arduous office of Foreign Secretary and became leader of the House of Commons. The duties which the representing so large a constituency entailed upon him he considered as incompatible with

the due discharge of those duties to the State, which his new position involved. He was then returned for the borough of Harwich.

During the time that he was the popular representative of this large constituency, he was the undisguised advocate of what were supposed to be the most unpopular measures of the day. He was a supporter of the Roman Catholic claims, of the Acts of Parliament, known by the name of the 'Six Acts' regulating popular meetings, and restraining the licentiousness of the press, and he was emphatically *the* opponent of Parliamentary Reform; yet, notwithstanding that he thus thwarted the popular prejudices, he was always the popular candidate. On his taking leave before his intended departure for India, he received an address praising his conduct, and thanking him for his services, which had been 'approved and sanctioned by the *unanimous* votes of all the mercantile associations in Liverpool,' amongst whom were to be found all parties in politics.

This is mainly attributable to the conviction which he forced on men's minds, that his opinions and actions, whatever they were, were earnest, patriotic, and honest, the result of deep and anxious deliberation—they felt that what he seemed to be, *that* he really was. They had no mistrust, because they were confident that he 'represented to them things as they 'really were, or, at least, as in his own honest judg-'ment he saw them.'

The following passage was spoken in 1818:—

The history of Europe [he said] for the last twenty-five year is something like this. A power went forth, animated

with the spirit of evil, to overturn every community of the civilized world. Before this dreadful assailant, empires, and monarchies, and republics bowed; some were crushed to the earth, others sought their safety by compromise. In the midst of this wide-spread ruin, among tottering columns and falling edifices, one fabric alone stood erect and braved the storm; and not only provided for its own internal security, but sent forth, at every portal, assistance to its weaker neighbours. On this edifice floated that ensign [pointing to the English ensign], a signal of rallying to the combatant, of shelter to the fallen.

To an impartial observer one should think something of this sort would have occurred. Here is a fabric constructed upon some principles not common to others in its neighbourhood—principles which enable it to stand erect when everything is prostrate around it. In the construction of this fabric, there must be some curious felicity which the eye of the philosopher would be well employed in investigating, and which its neighbours may profit by adopting. This would have been an obvious inference. What shall we think of their understandings who draw an inference directly the reverse, and who say to us, You have stood when others have fallen; when others have crouched, you have borne yourselves aloft; you alone have resisted the power which has shaken and swallowed up half the civilized world. We like not this suspicious peculiarity; there must be something wrong in your internal conformation. With this unhappy curiosity, and in the spirit of this perverse analysis, they proceed to dissect our Constitution; they find, that, like other states, we have a monarch; that a nobility, though not organized like ours, is common to all the great empires of Europe; but that our distinction lies in a popular assembly, which gives life, and vigour, and strength to the whole frame of Government. Here, therefore, they find the seat of our disease; our peccant part is undoubtedly the House of Commons. Hence our presumptuous exemption from what was the common lot of all our neighbours—the anomaly ought forthwith to be corrected, therefore the House of Commons must be reformed.

It cannot, gentlemen, but have struck you as somewhat extraordinary, that whereas in speaking of foreign sovereigns our reformers are never very sparing of uncourtly epithets; that whereas, in discussing the general principles of Government, they seldom omit an opportunity of discrediting and deriding the privileged orders of society; yet, when they come to discuss the British Constitution, nothing can be more respectful than their language towards the Crown—nothing more forbearing than their treatment of the aristocracy. With the House of Commons alone they take the freedom of familiarity; upon it they pour out all the vials of their wrath, and exhaust their denunciations of amendment.

This, though extraordinary, is not unintelligible. The reformers are wise in their generation. They know well enough, and have read plainly enough, in our own history, that the prerogatives of the Crown, and the privileges of the peerage would be but as dust in the balance against a preponderating democracy. They mean democracy, and nothing else, and give them but a House of Commons constructed on their own principles, the peerage and the Throne may exist for a day, but may be swept from the face of the earth by the first angry vote of such a House of Commons.

It is, therefore, utterly unnecessary for the reformers to declare hostility to the Crown—it is, therefore, utterly superfluous for them to make war against the peerage; they know that, let but their principles have full play, the Crown and the peerage would be to the Constitution which they assail but as the baggage to the army, and the destruction of them but as the gleanings of the battle. They know that the battle is with the House of Commons as at present constituted, and that *that* once overthrown, and another popular assembly constituted on their principles, as the creature and depository of the people's power, and the unreasoning instrument of the people's *will*, there would not only be no chance, but there would be no pretence for the existence of any other branch of the Constitution.

The whole fallacy lies in this, the reformers reason from false premises, and are therefore driving on their unhappy

adherents to false and dangerous conclusions. The Constitution of this country is a monarchy controlled by two assemblies, the one hereditary and independent alike of Crown and people; the other elected by and for the people; but elected for the purpose of controlling and not administering the Government. The error of the reformers, if error it can be called, is that they argue as if the Constitution of this country was a broad and level democracy, inlaid (for ornament's sake) with a peerage, and topped (by sufferance) with a Crown.

If they affirm that for such a Constitution—that is in effect for an uncontrolled democracy—the present House of Commons is not sufficiently popular, they are right; but such a Constitution is not what we have or what we desire. We are born under a monarchy, which it is our duty as much as it is for our happiness to preserve, and which there cannot be a doubt but that the reforms which are recommended to us, would ultimately destroy.

I love the monarchy, because limited and controlled as it is in our happy Constitution, I believe it to be not only the safest depository of power, but the surest guardian of liberty. I love the system of popular representation. Who can have more cause to value it than I have at this moment? . . . . but of popular representation I think we have enough for every purpose of jealous, steady, corrective, efficient control over the acts of that monarchical power which, for the safety and the peace of the community, is lodged in one sacred family, and descendible from sire to son.

* * * *

But they look far short of the ultimate effect of the doctrines of the present day, who do not see that their tendency is not to make a House of Commons such as, in theory, it has always been defined—a third branch of the Legislature, but to absorb the legislative and executive powers into one; to create an immediate delegation of the whole authority of the people, to which, practically, nothing could, and, in reasoning, nothing ought to, stand in opposition.

It would be well if those doctrines were the ebullitions of

the moment . . . . but unfortunately disseminated as they are amongst all ranks of the community, they are doing permanent and incalculable mischief. How lamentably is experience lost on mankind! for when—in what age or country of the world—have doctrines of this sort been reduced to practice, without leading through anarchy to military despotism? The revolution of the seasons is not more certain than is this connexion of events in the course of moral nature.

How 'lamentably, indeed, is experience lost upon mankind!' We fancy that we have mounted on the shoulders of our ancestors—that we are profiting by our stores of accumulated knowledge, and the wisdom of ages which are past; but we too surely move in the same road as those who have gone before us, and are advancing towards the same goal. The words of the wise may be inscribed on the records of our history, but they remain unheeded. Abstract principles of natural right are still set up as guides for action, although they are incompatible with the existence of civil organization. The man who has been born in and nurtured by a community, owes to that community a debt of obedience which extinguishes all original or natural rights. He receives, in exchange, security for life and property, and as much of freedom as his neighbours enjoy. No man has a natural right to power over his fellow-men; the only claim which any one has to power over others is, that it is for the good of the society in which he lives that it should be conferred upon him.

The British 'monarchy' exists 'limited and controlled,' because it is the safest 'depository of power and the surest guardian of liberty.' It exists, not for itself, but for the people. The House of Commons

exists, not for the sake of the rich or of the poor, or of any exclusive class in the community, but for the sake of all classes. The House of Lords exists at once as a barrier to regal or popular encroachment, and as a support to the prerogatives of the Crown and the liberties of the people. Where no such barrier or support is to be found, the executive is sure to seek a barrier, or support of a different kind. An army is raised to interpose between the absolute ruler (whether hereditary, or elective) and the people; whilst property gladly welcomes security in any shape, although liberty may be annihilated to obtain it. It has been truly and wisely remarked, that 'In 'every European community soldiers appear in pro-'portion as aristocracy recedes.'

The doctrines of Radical Reformers, in their full-blown perfection, are incompatible with social existence—social existence is based on mutual dependence, and mutual dependence would be destroyed, if equal power were given to each and all, and if each were freed from all responsibility in its exercise, by concealment.

> Ancient habits, which the reformers call prejudices; preconceived attachment, which they would call corruption; that mutual respect which makes the eye of a neighbour the security for each man's good conduct, but which the reformers would stigmatize as a confederacy among the few, for dominion over their fellows—all these things [said Mr. Canning] make men difficult to be moved to any extravagant and violent enterprise.

These are the things which reformers decry and ridicule, and not without a purpose. They pretend to condemn, as noxious, influence of whatever kind; 'the

'influence of property, rank, talents, family connexion, 'neighbourhood,' are, according to them, only influences of 'intimidation and corruption,' to be rooted out from amongst the elective body; well knowing, however, that if this were accomplished before an annual 'election came round, new connexions would have 'grown up,' which, according to their theory, ought to 'be again destroyed; new influences would have been 'acquired which ought again to be dispossessed of their 'authority.' If these fruitless attempts at unattainable purity were *bonâ fide* attempts on the part of those who recommend them, it would be to work against the natural current of human nature; but it is very certain that, when once the influences of existing society shall be trampled upon by those who make an outcry against all influence, and the mildness of established and legitimate influences shall be overthrown and converted into the harshness of power, and transferred into the hands of reformers, corruption may, indeed, disappear, but intimidation (and that of a very different kind to what is now so called), would remain; and the lieges would too late discover that they had changed King Log for King Stork, whether in the shape of a mob or of a despot.

It was thus [said Mr. Canning] at the beginning of the French Revolution; the first work of the reformers was to loosen every established political relation, every legal holding of man to man; to destroy every corporation, to dissolve every subsisting class of society, and to reduce the nation into individuals, in order afterwards to congregate them into mobs.

It is thus when individuals act in secret; there can then be no mutual respect, no check upon the pro-

ceedings of each man from the awe of his neighbour's disapprobation; and it is not till these social ties are broken through, that a man becomes the easy prey and the helpless tool of selfish and designing demagogues. By secresy alone can the elective franchise, which is a trust for the nation's good, be systematically changed into a possession for individual profit.

It is only by bearing these (Mr. Canning's) principles in mind, that any effectual stand can be made against democratic encroachments. It is impossible, for any long period of years, to defend an arbitrary line, if the franchise is to be conferred *on the ground of individual claims.* It cannot be denied that the man who rents a house at 9*l.* 10*s.* has as good a claim as the man who pays 10*l.*, and so on by degrees to the end, till manhood suffrage is arrived at. If the House of Commons ought to be an assembly delegated by the people, not to consult for the good of the nation, but to speak day by day the people's will, all that is to be done is to collect the will of the nation, and, having collected it in an adequate organ, that will is paramount and supreme.

But government is not a matter of will; the two are directly opposed to each other; the word, government, implies restraint upon the will. The nation or the human being that acts upon the impulses of an unbridled will, is sure to violate those eternal principles of divine law which, when defied, avenge themselves upon their violators. It is the duty, as much as it is the interest of every man, to learn what those principles are, and to conform his conduct to them: and so with nations; but the vast and complicated interests of a great people render this a work of im-

mense difficulty, which ought to be entrusted to a comparatively few, of tried wisdom, judgment, and experience, and to the discharge of which few of those few are really competent.

The great problem, then, for solution is, how to get together the body of men best fitted to consult for, and to promote the good of the nation; the great object to be kept in view is how to collect the best possible Legislature, not how to form constituencies, based on imagined rights, without regard to the character of the Legislature, which those constituencies will create. This is the one only principle, which can successfully grapple with democratic demands, but is sadly lost sight of by most men. The question which they ask themselves is, not what sort of a legislator will these men, if enfranchised, select? but are they men possessed of qualifications which give them a plausible claim to a vote? In short, the end too generally sought is how to construct what may be considered a fair constituency, not how to create a good working Legislature, whose wisdom and capacity for the direction of affairs afford the best chance of promoting the national welfare. If the formation of constituencies be the be-all and end-all of our patriotic aspirations, then the most perfect and the most theoretically excellent plan would be the establishment of electoral districts on a scale of monotonous uniformity.

Not so Mr. Canning. He said—

> I would have by choice—if the choice were yet to be made—I would have in the House of Commons great variety of interests, and I would have them find their way there by a great variety of rights of election: satisfied that uniformity of election would produce anything but a just representation

of various interests. As to the close boroughs, I know that through them have found their way into the House of Commons men whose talents have been an honour to their kind, and whose names are interwoven with the highest periods in the history of their country. I cannot think that system altogether vicious which has produced such fruits. Nor can I think that there should be but one road into that assembly, or that no man should be presumed fit for the deliberations of a senate, who has not had the nerves previously to face the storms of the hustings.

* * * *

I am [he said, towards the conclusion of his speech], I am for the whole Constitution. The liberty of the subject so much depends on the maintenance of the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown—on the acknowledgment of the legitimate power of the other House of Parliament, as it does in upholding that supreme power (for such is the power of the purse, in one sense of the word, though not in the sense of the resolution of 1648) which resides in the democratical branch of the Constitution. Whatever beyond its just proportion is gained by one part, would be gained at the expense of the whole; and the balance is now, perhaps as nearly poised, as human wisdom can adjust it. I fear to touch that balance, the disturbance of which must bring confusion on the nation.

This was the kind of language repeatedly addressed by Mr. Canning, not to an audience of senators or philosophers, but to the constituents of a populous town. A fearless and undisguised avowal of opinion tends to excite confidence and respect; and such, in the present instance, was its effect.

Still, in the country at large, the cry for reform waxed loud; and about the period of the Queen's trial, and during the succeeding two years, when the agricultural interests were greatly depressed, it grew still louder and louder.

It was in April, 1821, when Mr. Canning was out of office, that Mr. Lambton brought forward his motion of Reform, the debate on which met with an abrupt termination. On the first night there was an adjournment: Mr. John Cam Hobhouse having concluded the evening with a fierce attack upon Mr. Canning. On the morrow, when the debate was resumed, I went down to the House to hear his defence. I remember his walking up the House at half-past seven, with a book under his arm, evidently well prepared. But the Opposition seats were mostly empty. Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor had invited them to an early dinner, at which were present the mover, Mr. Lambton, and the assailant, Mr. Hobhouse. They were enjoying the pleasures of the table, in the confident expectation that Mr. Canning would not speak before nine o'clock. He had hardly, however, entered the House, before the debate began to flag: nobody rose on either side. At last, Mr. Vansittart, who was then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was put up to speak against time. He had not spoken above ten minutes, before it became painfully evident that he was nearly pumped dry. Those present grew alarmed lest they should, after all, lose Mr. Canning's speech. Their alarms were too well-founded; in another five minutes Mr. Vansittart's well was exhausted; no one rose on either side. Mr. Canning not choosing to speak in the absence of his opponents, a division took place. While it was going on, the dinner-party arrived at the door of the House, and to the intense disgust of the mover, found that the motion was being irrevocably disposed of, for good or for evil.

As has been already stated, Mr. Canning was in

the habit of putting down notes for his speeches from which he spoke. There is now before me the very elaborate paper which he had prepared for this occasion, in which the number of headings amount to 400. On the first page is this autograph note.

Prepared for Mr. Lambton's motion in April, 1821, but not used. The debate having gone off on the second day, by a sudden division before eight o'clock.

G. C.

And perhaps it was well that it did so go off. For Mr. Canning was always fully persuaded that his assailant, Mr. Hobhouse, was the author of a pamphlet which he considered as suggestive of his assassination. He had sent to the publisher of that pamphlet, for the anonymous author, an indignant letter, of which no notice was taken. These circumstances explain the following headings in the manuscript in question.

391. But in or out of office.

392. The Constitution is my object of worship.

393. And in this her temple.

394. For that obloquy.

395. For that demonstration.

396. For that designation, and I pretty well know by what pen, to the dagger of the assassin.

397. But it is past—the danger and the scorn.

398. Let them rail, or let them repent.

399. My course is the same.

400. And while I have the strength, I desire no other duty than that of doing my best in defence of a form of Government which, if destroyed, could not be replaced, and which may yet afford shelter and glory to generations who will know how to value and preserve it.

There are two more recorded speeches on the subject of Reform, which are to be found in the pages

of *Hansard*. They are, for the most part, only a repetition in a new dress of the same arguments, on which he had previously relied. But I remember his being very much amused, when (having to deal with Knaresborough, then a close borough, in which the Duke of Devonshire's interest was paramount, and of which Mr. Tierney and Sir James Mackintosh were the members), he discovered the following sentence in a publication describing the borough: 'The mem-'bers never appear at the elections, and it is the con-'stant practice to chair two old paupers by way of 'proxies.' His merriment was unbounded at the idea of such grave old members of Parliament as Mr. Tierney and Sir James, having those undignified representatives on these important occasions.

In the notes for the speech in 1825, there are these memorandums:—

My objections to a reform in the House of Commons are now as they have always been;

1. That it is not necessary.

2. That it is not safe.

I speak of a reform on the principle of general improvement, not of the partial redress of particular, and specified grievances.

Corruption for instance is a positive evil as well as a positive crime.

Correct, and punish, and prevent it.—*Grampound.*

And if out of such correction grows an incidental accession to the popular part of the representation, with all my heart. —*Yorkshire.*

But this is not—the noble lord will not pretend that it is —his view of reform.

He means something much more general. He proposes not only to correct delinquencies, but to remove defects, and not defects only but unsightlinesses.

He proposes to bring the House of Commons nearer to the people, to identify it with them, to make it the organ of their opinions, and of their *will*.

Now I deny that it ought to be the organ of their *will*.

1. Because *will* is not the just foundation of government.

2. Because, if it be so, and if there be an organ which speaks that *will*, every other organ is superfluous, and the government is wholly in the House of Commons.

Government is a matter not of *will*, but of *reason*.

And on that very account it is that all simple forms of government are bad.

A simple monarchy is tyranny.

A simple democracy is tyranny and anarchy combined.

What is the whole contrivance of limited monarchy but a restraint upon the *will* of the monarch; a compulsion upon him to substitute *reason* for volition?

Is it supposed that the people are not quite as susceptible of arbitrary and unconsidered measures, as liable to be misled, as open to flattery and seductions, as a monarch?

Quite as much, often even more so. And as all the contrivances of mixed monarchies are to guard against these dangers from a king, so is it desirable that corresponding restraints should impede the precipitate action of the people.

But secondly, if you obtain a perfect representation of the *will* of the people, an immediate and obedient organ of that will, what room is there for any other?

There may be a multitude of counsellors, but there can be but one authoritative agent.

History has not left us in the dark as to the inference to be drawn from such a system, nor as to the consequences practically deducible from it.

I, therefore, am against the creation of such an organ, if it does not exist; and so far from admitting its non-existence to be a motive for agreeing to the noble lord's motion, I congratulate myself that it does not exist.

To the end of his life Mr. Canning's opinions never varied, nor did he relax in his strenuous opposition

to all proposals for reform, 'on the principle of general improvement.'

Such progress had he made in bringing over the public to his views, that when in 1827 Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Tierney, and Lord Carlisle joined his Government, and when Mr. Brougham and other Whigs gave it their support, it was on the express condition that Reform was to be, not an open question, but one, which the *united* Cabinet were to oppose; and Lord John Russell himself 'declared' in the House in 1826, when he brought forward a motion on the subject, 'that that would be the last occasion of his doing so,' and 'why,' he asked in 1827, 'had I made that declaration? Because I found,' he said, 'a great lukewarmness on the subject throughout the country.'* The year in which Mr. Canning came into office, between six and seven hundred petitions were presented in favour of reform. The year in which he became first Minister, there were only seven.

If it be asked what were the means which he employed, what was the talisman with which he worked, it may be inferred from the contents of the following memorandum made by me at the time:—

(*Memorandum.*)

June 3, 1827.

Being in Downing Street to-day with Lord ——, Mr. Planta, and Mr. Canning, the state of the Corn Bill in the House of Lords was the subject of discussion. Mr. Canning said, that if the Lords persisted in the Duke of Wellington's amendment, the bill would be thrown out in the Commons, and then what price

* *Parliamentary Debates*, May 3, 1827.

the agriculturists would get next year he would not answer for. For himself, the most he should try for would be 50*s*. Upon Lord ——'s saying—'The House of Lords would never consent to that;' Mr. Canning lighted up, and said, 'It would be a great 'misfortune indeed if the Lords should take so narrow 'a view of their present situation. They ought to 'see that we are on the brink of a great struggle 'between property and population. Such a struggle 'is only to be averted by the mildest and most liberal 'legislation. Mark my words,' he said, with extraordinary emphasis, 'that struggle will some day come, 'when probably I may be removed from the scene; 'but if the policy of the Newcastles and the Northumberlands is to prevail, that struggle cannot be staved 'off much longer.'

In these few words, coupled with what is gone before, the key of his system may be discovered. It was this:—

Commit not unlimited power to the great mass of the people. All unlimited and irresponsible power is sure to be abused—restrict power to its present possessors, but let them use it *wisely*, not for their own benefit according to the caprices of their own *will*, but according to the dictates of sound reason, which prescribes 'the mildest and most liberal legislation.'

And this explanation tallies with Lord John's:—

I believe [he said, in the same speech in which he mentioned 'the lukewarmness'] that that growing lukewarmness is attributable to the improvement which had taken place in the manner of conducting the Government. Whether the people of this kingdom were wrong or right in allowing themselves to become indifferent upon such a cause, it was

not for him now to examine; but he did believe that, as long as they saw the general affairs of the country well conducted, and actuated by a spirit of improvement, they would not look too narrowly into the constitution of the Commons House of Parliament.

On the other hand, there is another kind of reform not democratic, which, nevertheless, is not without its perils—viz. that which mainly throws the legislative power into the hands of men of business, already full of all kinds of occupation, to the *exclusion* of men who have leisure for deep study and reflection, and are therefore able to cope with great principles on the various subjects of legislation. There is no small danger in thrusting into the arcana of Government men, whose hearts and hands are full of the common business of life, and *who seek to become legislators, not to benefit their country, but themselves.*

'How can *they* get wisdom who are occupied in 'business, who trust to their hands, and live upon 'their labour? Without such as these, wise in their 'work, a country cannot be inhabited; but they shall 'not be sought for in public counsel, nor shall they 'sit high in the congregation.'*

* *Ecclus.* c. 38.

CHAPTER XXII.

FOREIGN POLICY—PARTITION OF POLAND—MR. CANNING'S VISIT TO PARIS, 1816—DEATH OF LORD LONDONDERRY (CASTLEREAGH)—MR. CANNING BECOMES FOREIGN SECRETARY.

WITH the settlement of Europe, made by the treaties of Vienna, Mr. Canning had no concern. They were negotiated during his sojourn at Lisbon. They have been discussed in the *Political Life.** That that settlement was not made on the principles which Mr. Canning approved, is well known: but from the time when they were signed to the end of his life, he always held that their provisions were to be accepted as inviolable by England, and that it was the duty of British statesmen to maintain them in their integrity.

Allowance ought to be made for the difficulties of Lord Castlereagh's position. The Emperor Alexander, from the beginning, had evidently made up his mind to seize the largest share of the spoil, and so alarmed were the other Powers at the grasping ambition of Russia, that the representatives at the Congress of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, and France, entered into a defensive treaty against Russian encroachment. There was a difficulty in getting together the parties who were to sign this treaty, with-

* Vol. i. ch. i.

out awakening the suspicion of the Russians. The signatures of Hardenberg, Talleyrand, Metternich, Castlereagh, and Wellington, were to be attached to the treaty in each others' presence. The desired meeting was thus effected. Lord Castlereagh gave a ball, at which Mr. Joseph Planta was commissioned to guide to his bed-room in Lord Castlereagh's house all these celebrated personages; withdrawing them from the ball-room one by one, till all were assembled. This important service he successfully performed without exciting suspicion, and the treaty was duly signed. The French Government, of course, had one of the copies; and in the confusion which ensued at Paris, when Napoleon approached on his return from Elba, this copy was left at the Tuileries, and fell into Napoleon's hands, who sent it forthwith to the Emperor Alexander. It is with reference to this treaty that Lord Castlereagh expresses, in his letter* to Lord Liverpool, of March 27, 1815, his great anxiety, lest M. de Blacas should in his flight have neglected to carry it away with him. The Russian Government, however, never adverted to it. For, before it fell into the hands of the Czar, such concessions had been made by the British Plenipotentiary as satisfied his Imperial Majesty. Previously, however, to Lord Castlereagh's giving in, it should be remembered that he made some bold remonstrances in private letters, which he addressed directly to the Emperor. Extracts (and only extracts) from these letters are to be found in the *State Papers*.† But it is difficult to form a fair

* *Castlereagh Papers*, vol. ii. p. 286. † 1814–15, p. 1173.

estimate of their contents, without knowing how the gaps are filled up in the originals. Lord Castlereagh's first letter is dated on the 4th of October, 1814, and seems, by the Emperor's answer, not to have been very palatable to his Imperial Majesty; but while it is impossible not to admire the explicit boldness with which Lord Castlereagh expressed his sentiments to so powerful a monarch, yet the correspondence affords a useful warning of the extreme difficulty of making a stand on expediency, when principle is surrendered.

Up to the period of the Congress at Vienna, no British statesman had ever set his hand to an instrument, acknowledging, as valid acts, the two partitions of Poland. Had the British Plenipotentiary founded his objections upon this principle—had he positively refused to commit his Government to any such acknowledgment, and had he insisted on the erection of an independent Polish State, he would (to use his own words) 'have been applauded by the 'whole of Europe, whilst Austria and Prussia would 'not only not have opposed it, but, on the contrary, 'would have acquiesced in it with pleasure.'

Backed by such powerful support, as well as by the voice of public opinion throughout Europe, it is more than probable that he might have been successful: but the moment when he gave up this principle, and told the Emperor that he was 'not indisposed to 'witness, even with satisfaction, that his Imperial 'Majesty should receive a liberal and important 'aggrandizement on his Polish frontier, and that it 'was to the *degree* and the *mode* to which he alone 'objected,' he threw away the only weapon which

he could successfully wield. The greater point was attainable, but the abandonment of the greater was fatal to the attainment of the less. There was—there could be—no answer to the following argument of the Emperor as to the share of the spoil, considered as a matter of spoil, to which he was entitled.

Mais lorsque l'Autriche et la Prusse ont contribué, comme alliées de la France, à depouiller la Russie de la plus grande parties des provinces Polonnaises; quand la Russie a été obligé de les reconquèrir; lorsque la conquête du Duché de Varsovie devient aujourdhui une compensation pour d'énormes sacrifices: il s'agit effectivement d'un nouveau partage, et dans ce cas, les stipulations qui ont accompagné celui de 1797 n'existent plus.

Had Lord Castlereagh denounced the original, as well as the proposed *partage*, instead of making appeals *ad misericordiam*, his remonstrances might have been effectual. But it was of no avail to tell the Emperor 'that he was exacting from his neighbours and allies 'an arrangement incompatible with their political 'independence,' and that the demand by Russia to retain so large a share of Poland as that to which the Emperor laid claim, 'was a source of consterna-'tion and alarm to Austria and Prussia, and of general 'terror throughout all the States of Europe.'* His Imperial Majesty's Austrian and Prussian allies had no claim upon his forbearance, and it was impossible

* These two last sentences are taken from the correspondence which was published in the newspapers about twelve years ago, and form part of the omissions in the *State Papers*. This correspondence, though mentioned in the *Castlereagh Papers*, is not given in those Papers.

to defeat the Emperor's claims when, on the principle on which they were made, no one could deny their justice.

The partition being admitted, the 'degree and the mode' could only be decided by the will of that party whose claims were the strongest, and whose power was adequate to support the claims. The result was, that Great Britain accepted the partition as *un fait accompli*, and that Russia obtained almost all that she asked for.

Mr. Cook, a man of very considerable ability and firmness, who was Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, and who accompanied Lord Castlereagh to Vienna, endeavoured in vain to rouse his chief to an uncompromising condemnation of the two partitions. He urged him to fling the treaties on the table of Congress, and to declare that nothing should induce Great Britain to acknowledge the validity of those acts. He urged in vain: but he set the seal on the sincerity of his own opinions, by resigning at once his post of Under-Secretary of State. He was succeeded at Vienna by Mr. Planta.*

It has been already stated that Mr. Canning on his return from Lisbon accepted the Presidentship of the Board of Control. In the autumn of that year (1816) he paid a short visit to Paris. He thus writes:—

MY DEAR MORLEY,

I have liked my visit to Paris exceedingly. Indeed I must have been very difficult to please if I had not been satisfied with my reception here. I can hardly say whether

* By whom this anecdote was communicated to the author.

King, or Princes, or Ministers, or Ultras have been most civil; and the only difficulty which I have found in the midst of these conflicting civilities is to avoid giving any imputation of party partialities. The state of parties is curious, and their different views of the situation of the country, and of the measures to be adopted for perfecting a representative system of government, form an object of interesting observation, but one which it would require sheets, instead of lines, to exhibit to you in all the views in which that interest is excited.

Nothing has occurred since the meeting of the Chambers to bring the two parties into open engagement. As yet the Ministers have carried everything; that is to say, the decision of elections and the nomination of presidents, by sufficient majorities. Their adversaries, nevertheless, talk with confidence of their own strength as constituting a minority formidable in itself, and likely to grow still more so. Something of course must be deducted from the statements of each side. But upon the whole, though I doubt whether the dissolution has done ALL for the Ministers which they expected, I think they are strong enough to go on, especially as they seem willing to take some of the weapons of their adversaries out of their hands by adapting them to their own use. Such is the notice in the King's speech of an intended provision for the clergy.

The great object of desire for us is, that there should not be any convulsion in France; and I hope and think there will not be any. The most trying circumstance in their situation (and I am afraid in ours at home) is the failure of the harvest.

My intention is to leave Paris next week, so as to be in London soon after the 24th. Nothing would detain me here beyond the 20th but the certainty of a debate of importance, and even that will not keep us so long as to defer my arrival in London beyond the 30th.

Mrs. Canning is very well, and has seen more of the Paris world within this month than of the London world since she was married. For my own part I would not run the evening

rounds in London, which I cannot avoid here, for any consideration, whether of pleasure or of politics.

I know not where this will find you. It is not likely that I should receive your acknowledgment of it here: but write nevertheless, and direct to the India Board, from whom I have boxes twice a week.

Believe me, ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

The following extracts give a further account of this visit at Paris:—

MY DEAR MORLEY, Gloucester Lodge, Dec. 14, 1816.

After a very tiresome journey of three days from Paris to Boulogne, and a still more tiresome passage of about fourteen hours from Boulogne to Dover, we reached this place on Saturday evening.

The interval of Sunday was just sufficient to brace one's nerves against the anxieties of Monday.* That day went off, however, with much less mischief than was apprehended; and than there was good reason to apprehend; and I hope it has laid a foundation for future peace and security. It was high time.

* * * *

I have seen nobody since my arrival, except my royal master (with whom I passed a couple of hours on Sunday), Liverpool, Bathurst, Melville, Van., and Sidmouth; Binning, who goes to Scotland in a day or two, and Huskisson, who arrived in town yesterday evening.

Let me hear that you are all well. See you, I presume I shall not, till the middle of next month.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

P.S.—I liked Paris to the last, and was very sorry to leave it, though after Talleyrand's arrival, and after his public

---

* Spa Fields Meeting.

denunciations of opposition, I should have felt somewhat more difficulty in society than before.

I was *not* present (as the newspapers aver) at the scene at Stuart's.* But we dined with him (Mrs. Canning and I) on the Saturday before we came away; and he (Talleyrand) *seemed* to be disposed to *make* up to me very much. We had not met since the year 1794, when I went on a fruitless mission to Pitt to beg off the order for his (T.'s) quitting the country.

The tactics of his partisans was to give out that England evinced a strong anxiety for his restoration to the Ministry, that it was England and Talleyrand, *versus* Russia and Richelieu;† and I saw clearly enough that no demonstrations on his part would be wanting to countenance, and possibly in the hope of realizing, this representation.

For a week or two this did not signify, but a month or six weeks more of balance between *these* parties would have been delicate steering. With the fourth, the Jacobins, concentred in the person of Mad. de St.,‡ I had pretty much made up my mind to have done. If there be danger of convulsion in France, it is from that quarter. G. C.

From this period to the time when Mr. Canning resigned on account of the Queen's affair, he was only responsible for such matters of foreign policy as the Foreign Secretary, in the exercise of his discretion, brought under the consideration of his colleagues in the Cabinet. During these years only one marked step was taken by the Cabinet respecting the events which occurred on the Continent. But the elements of mischief were silently growing. The combination of continental Sovereigns, known by the name of the Holy Alliance, which was formed almost before the Con-

* Sir C. Stuart, afterwards Lord Stuart de Rothsay.

† Duc de Richelieu, then French Premier.

‡ Madame de Stael.

gress at Vienna was dissolved, was gradually encroaching on such popular liberty as existed throughout Europe: and the natural consequence resulted in the discontent and murmurs of the people. In 1820 these discontents burst forth in four different countries of Europe nearly at the same time; in Spain first, then Naples, then Piedmont, and lastly in Portugal: in all a mutinous army, backed by an insurgent people, demanded, and obtained from their respective Sovereigns constitutional forms of government.

The Holy Alliance took fright, and forthwith a Congress was assembled at Troppau, which adjourned to Laybach, to consult on the best mode of repressing these outbreaks. The result of the consultation was, that Austria, as the agent of the Alliance, marched two armies, one into the Neapolitan territories, and the other into the kingdom of Sardinia, and stifled in their infancy the Constitutional Governments which had been there established. In both cases, with very little resistance, the absolute Governments were restored. The Alliance, elated with its success in Italy, determined on holding another Congress at Vienna in the autumn of the succeeding year (1822), professedly for the purpose of settling the affairs of Italy, and consulting as to the unsatisfactory state of the relations between Russia and Turkey; a rupture was then threatening between these two Powers, whilst Eastern affairs were still further complicated by the insurrection of the Greeks against their Ottoman masters.

The real object, however, of those who called the Congress together, was to apply the same treatment to the Constitutional Government of Spain, which had

been, in the previous year, applied to those of Naples and Piedmont. Spanish affairs, also (like those of Turkey) were greatly embarrassed by the prolonged and successful resistance of the Spanish American colonies to the dominion of the mother country.

This was the position of foreign affairs* when Lord Castlereagh (who was going, as British Plenipotentiary, to this Congress at Vienna), in a paroxysm of insanity, evidently brought on by too much work and mental anxiety, terminated his life by his own hand.

When this melancholy catastrophe happened, the King was in Scotland, the different members of the Cabinet were dispersed for their holidays, and Mr. Canning was in the north of England. As soon as the event was known, all eyes were directed to him as the fittest man to succeed. Some time elapsed, however, before the question was decided. Considerable difficulties had to be encountered. The unfriendly feelings of the King were known to be very strong; and Lord Chancellor Eldon, the Duke of Wellington, and some other less powerful members of the Cabinet, were opposed to his known principles and policy. On the other hand, Lord Liverpool was his warm and constant friend, and knew his value. The only rival who could have filled the place was Mr. Peel, and he had not yet attained sufficient confidence in himself to covet this

* This work, as has been already stated, being of a supplementary character, so much only of an historical outline of events is given as will suffice to remind the reader of their order, to enable the letters to be understood. Details are to be found in the *Political Life of Mr. Canning.*

arduous and responsible succession. The following letter was written before any offer was made:—

Seaforth, near Liverpool, Aug. 26, 1822.

MY DEAR MORLEY,

Your kind letter should not have waited so long for an answer if I had anything to tell you. It is more difficult, indeed, to say why I write now, than why I did not write sooner; for I have now nothing to tell, and I have no pleasure in speculating upon what may happen.

I wish I were well on board the *Jupiter*.*

Nothing that can be proposed to me will make me glad to stay, though such a proposal *may* be made as would make the refusal to stay impossible.

But as to staying after a refusal, or after *no* proposal, I cannot comprehend what object is worth pursuing, or likely to be achieved by such a sacrifice.

It is not till after the King's return from Edinburgh that any decision is to be expected. Consequently I cannot hear anything (if I am to hear anything at all) till after the 30th. On which day, therefore, I shall take leave of my constituents, simply as if there were no imaginable impediment to my departure.

I believe that nobody is yet able to speculate with confidence on what may be the tenor of any communication to me.

But I will give you Charles's† and Granville's opinions.

The former thinks that either the whole inheritance (the only acceptable proposal) will be offered to me, or nothing.

The latter apprehends a modification, such as the substitution of Colonial Department for Foreign.

The first I *must* accept, I fear; the last I should certainly reject. The middle case will spare me any trouble.

I see no other possible modification but one which would at all perplex me, and *that* I think highly improbable, and

---

* The ship which was to carry him to India.

† Mr. C. Ellis, afterwards Lord Seaford.

therefore will not perplex myself with mooting it unnecessarily.

Ever yours affectionately,

G. C.

The opposition to Lord Londonderry's entire inheritance being offered was not great by any members of the Cabinet. They knew that Lord Liverpool was ready to sacrifice his official existence rather than there should be any such offer made as Mr. Canning would have been justified in refusing. The King yielded with a good grace, and that offer was made to him which he 'feared' that he 'must accept.'

A sentence in a letter dated September 17, 1822, thus records the character of the first interview between the Sovereign and his restored Minister:—

I have reason to be contented with the King's behaviour at our first interview; and I have learned from good authority that his Majesty professes himself to have been 'pleased and satisfied' with mine.

The following letter was written after Mr. Canning had been a few weeks at the Foreign Office:—

(*Private.*)

My dear Charles,* Walmer Castle, Nov. 5, 1822.

Your letter of the 12th of October has given me one of the few sensations of real pleasure which I derive from my return to the Foreign Office. By far the greater number of considerations public and private were against acceptance, and to the last day I hoped that the proposal made to me might be one which I could refuse.

That which has been made was the only one that I could

* Sir Charles Bagot, ambassador at St. Petersburgh.

not—about any other I should not—have had the slightest hesitation. The die being cast, I must make the best of that lot which has fallen to me, and place public duty against private liking and convenience. But ten years have made a world of difference, and prepared a very different sort of world to bustle in than that which I should have found in 1812. For fame, it is a squeezed orange; but for public good there is something to do, and I will try—but it must be cautiously—to do it. You know my politics well enough to know what I mean, when I say that for *Europe*, I shall be desirous *now* and *then* to read *England*.

I accept and hold you to your menace of ample private communication. Let me hear from you soon, and often.

Remember me to Lady B. You may congratulate my wife, though not me, on our change of destination; for to her and my daughter the voyage and the climate of India are real escapes, in imagination at least, if not in reality.

Yours ever affectionately,

G. C.

Mr. Canning's speech at Plymouth, in the autumn of 1823, throws a light upon the meaning of his observation in the above letter, that 'for Europe he would be desirous, now and then, to read England.'

The language of modern philosophy is widely and diffusely benevolent; it professes the perfection of our species, and the amelioration of the lot of all mankind. Gentlemen, I hope that my heart beats as high for the general interests of humanity—I hope that I have as friendly a disposition towards other nations of the earth, as any one who vaunts his philanthropy most highly; but I am contented to confess that in the conduct of political affairs the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England.

Not, gentlemen, that the interest of England is an interest which stands isolated and alone. The situation which she holds forbids an exclusive selfishness. Her prosperity must contribute to the prosperity of surrounding nations, and her

stability to the safety of the world. But intimately connected as we are with the system of Europe, it does not follow that we are, therefore, called upon to mix ourselves on every occasion, with a restless and meddling activity, in the concerns of the nations which surround us. It is upon a just balance of conflicting duties, and of rival, but sometimes incompatible, advantages, that a Government must judge when to put forth its strength, and when to husband it for occasions yet to come. Our ultimate object must be the peace of the world.

These are the same principles (though proclaimed towards the close of his career) which, in early years, he enshrined in the poetry of the *Anti-Jacobin*:—

> What! shall a name, a word, a sound control
> The aspiring thought and cramp the expansive soul?
> Shall one half-peopled island's rocky round
> A love which glows for all creation bound!
> And social charities contract the plan
> Formed for thy freedom, *Universal Man?*
> No; through the extended globe *his* feelings run
> As broad and general as the unbounded sun!
> No narrow bigot *he*—his reasoned view
> Thy interests, England! ranks with thine, Peru!
> France at our doors, he sees no danger nigh,
> But heaves for Turkey's woes the impartial sigh;
> A steady patriot of the world alone,
> The friend of every country—but his own.

In entering into the Cabinet Mr. Canning had an up-hill game to play—'for public good there was, indeed, something to do,' but he knew that, if he 'tried,' 'it must be *cautiously* to do it.' He had to change the system of our foreign policy: the events which had occurred during the preceding two years appeared to him to have signally illustrated its impolicy. But in so doing he had to contend against

the powerful influences in the Cabinet of the 'Continental School'—influences which had been growing up, secretly but surely, ever since the Peace of 1815.

The Duke of Wellington was a formidable antagonist; but, as a politician, I may be permitted to think him inferior to Mr. Canning. Each had his peculiar excellence, but the mind of the Duke was framed in that mould, which makes a great commander rather than a great statesman. He would take in more at a glance than, perhaps, any man who ever lived; and that comprehensive glance was backed by a nerve for prompt decision and prompt action, which was the main secret of his victories, and made him the terror of his foes.

But these qualities, which constitute the excellence of a general, are often but the stumbling-blocks of a statesman. To discern quickly and comprehensively, to decide fearlessly and *instanter*, is far better in a general, than a wiser decision taken by and bye, when the opportunity having passed, it is too late to profit by it; but, with a statesman, quick decisions are rarely necessary, and seldom advantageous. With political questions the Duke dealt as with questions of strategy; he made up his mind at once, dismissed them from his thoughts, and there was an end of the matter; he tried to bend circumstances beyond control to his own ideas, instead of bending his ideas to those circumstances. On the other hand, Mr. Canning would consider a subject in all its details, would obtain about it every possible information, would cautiously and deliberately weigh every possible contingency, and would enlarge his view in every possible direction; this done, the result was deci-

sion, backed by firmness. The consequence was, Mr. Canning never departed from his principles from the beginning to the end of his public life; whereas the Duke, more than once, found himself in a position when he considered himself obliged to abandon his principles, and to reverse his policy.

Lord Liverpool, however, was Mr. Canning's main-stay, and his power, as Premier, proved an all-sufficient support.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FOREIGN POLICY EXPLAINED IN SPEECH AT LIVERPOOL—LETTERS ON CONGRESS AT VERONA, AND TO THE KING—CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR HENRY WELLESLEY.

AT Liverpool, on the 30th of August, 1822, Mr. Canning thus explained his system of foreign policy.

Gentlemen, in the times in which we live there is (disguise it how we may) a struggle going on—in some countries an open, in some a tacit struggle—between the principles of monarchy and democracy: God be praised that in that struggle we have not any part to take. God be praised that we have long ago arrived at all the blessings that are to be derived from that which alone can end that struggle beneficially—a compromise and intermixture of those conflicting principles. It is not, as it appears to me, the duty of this country to side either with the assailants when they aim at too much, nor with those who stand upon the defensive, when they will grant nothing. England has only to maintain herself on the basis of her own solid and settled Constitution, firm, unshaken—a spectatress interested in the contest only by her sympathies; not a partisan on either side, but, for the sake of both, a model, and ultimately perhaps an umpire. Should we be led by any false impulse of chivalrous benevolence to participate in the struggle itself, we commit, and thereby impair our authority; we abandon the position in which we might hereafter do most good, and may bring the danger of a foreign struggle home to our own hearths, and to our own institutions.

These words were spoken after Lord Londonderry's death, but before any proposition had been made to Mr. Canning to join the Administration.

The following private letter to Sir Charles Bagot gives a sketch of the results of the Congress of Verona.*

Foreign Office, Jan. 3, 1823.

I am afraid your Excellency will owe me a grudge for the issue of Verona, which has split the one and indivisible Alliance into three parts as distinct as the constitutions of England, France, and Muscovy. First, there are the three absolute Crowns, who send their angry despatches to their Ministers at Madrid with orders to come away if they do not receive submissive answers in fifteen days. Next, there is France, who sends a whining despatch to her Minister, with no orders at all as to coming away. Thirdly, there *is we*, who are in a course of amicable and furious correspondence with Spain; amicable so far as relates to Europe, in which quarter of the globe we defend her against invasion; furious in relation to America, where we have a squadron now employed in seeking forcible redress for grievances. To keep these two strains simultaneously operating upon the nerves and feelings of the Spaniards; to hold a shield before them with one hand, and to punish them with the other, has been, and is still, a matter of no small delicacy and difficulty. But I hope we may manage it. One symptom of our success I had the satisfaction of receiving yesterday, in the shape of a letter from the Spanish Government to their Governor at Porto Cabello (a military post on the Spanish Main), directing him to raise a blockade which he had presumed to institute (without reasonable cause, and without adequate force to justify and maintain it), and which we had given notice that we would break without scruple. This letter is sent to us in duplicate, to be delivered by our commander in the West Indies. Promises are at the same time held out of a

* For details of that Congress, see *Political Life*, vol. i. ch. iii.

complete settlement of all our grievances, and in consideration of them we send orders to suspend the execution of our hostile intentions.

France, in the meantime, though indebted to us, and professing to feel herself so for our good offices with Spain for the preservation of the peace, is (like Polly in the music), 'as jealous as a cat' of our doings, and supposed intentions in the West Indies.

With all my heart. Villèle is a Minister of thirty years ago—no revolutionary scoundrel: but constitutionally hating England, as Choiseul and Vergennes used to hate us—and so things are getting back to a wholesome state again. Every nation for itself, and God for us all. Only bid your Emperor be quiet, for the time for Areopagus, and the like of that, is gone by.

To Sir C. Bagot.

To the King, Mr. Canning thus explains his views on foreign policy.

Foreign Office, July 11, 1823.

Mr. Canning fears that he may appear to your Majesty to be guilty of unpardonable presumption, in venturing humbly to lay before your Majesty the accompanying publication.*

He does not entertain so vain an expectation as that your Majesty should have either leisure or inclination to read it through. But if your Majesty should condescend to look into it at all, he confesses he is anxious that your Majesty should be graciously pleased to cast your eye over a few pages in the part which he has marked, as containing an exposition of the principles which Mr. Canning humbly presumes to be of opinion may best guide your Majesty's Government through the difficulties, present and to come, of the crisis in which Europe and the world are now labouring.

Mr. Canning has, after much doubt and hesitation, determined to take the liberty of bringing his opinion in this manner before your Majesty; because he has not been able

* Mr. Canning's *Speech on the Verona Negotiations.*

to divest himself of an apprehension, lest your Majesty should have been led to conceive that—as the course of events and the changes of circumstances have gradually, but unavoidably, relaxed in some degree the bonds by which the great despotic Powers of the Continent assumed your Majesty to be inseparably tied to all their principles and projects—Mr. Canning has been actuated (whether advisedly or unconsciously) by a desire to see the weight of your Majesty's authority thrown into an opposite scale. Far otherwise. Mr. Canning is intimately convinced that the true position of your Majesty in the existing shock of adverse theories and extreme opinions, is a neutral position; neutral, as much between conflicting principles as between contending nations; and that it is by preserving that position, which belongs to your Majesty *alone* among all the Sovereigns of Europe, that your Majesty will at once carry your own people to the highest pitch of prosperity, and be best enabled to save other countries from the dangers which may threaten almost all of them in their turn.

A month after this letter a correspondence, on the same subject, took place between Mr. Canning and Sir Henry Wellesley, the British ambassador at Vienna.

(*Private.*)

My dear Canning, Vienna, Aug. 27, 1823.

I avail myself of this opportunity of answering your private letter, which relates to the premature communication at Constantinople of Count Nesselrode's letter to the Reis Effendi.

It is certainly possible that that communication may have been made from hence, and with Metternich's knowledge; but I do not think it probable, since if he had made it with a view of taking to himself the merit of having produced a more favourable disposition in the Russian Cabinet towards the Porte, he would have been anxious rather to have concealed from me the praises bestowed upon him by the Reis

Effendi, than have dwelt upon them, as he evidently did, with much satisfaction.

It is impossible at the same time to converse with Prince Metternich, and not to see that his great ambition is to place himself at the head of the politics of the Continent. He considers himself, and wishes to be considered by others, as the champion of old systems, and the great opposer of innovation throughout Europe. He prides himself upon his dexterity in having got complete possession of the Emperor of Russia and of the King of Prussia; and the Ministers of these Sovereigns, as well as the French ambassador at this Court, are devoted to his politics, and to himself personally.

He is certainly not satisfied with the line taken by Great Britain upon the Spanish question, although, upon being pressed upon that subject, he admits that we could not do otherwise than maintain a strict neutrality. He maintains, however, that the speeches of both Houses of Parliament upon the Spanish question (with the exception of the Duke of Buckingham's) are calculated to uphold the cause of revolution, and indicate a policy on the part of his Majesty's Government different from that which dictated the several treaties entered into at the termination of the war.

I have endeavoured to make him understand, that speeches in Parliament upon questions of public importance should generally be considered as speaking the sentiments of the nation at large; and that no set of Ministers could expect to remain at the head of affairs, if they did not take care that their language in Parliament accorded, in some degree at least, with the feelings of the people. That, in this very case of Spain, the Government were from the first determined to observe a strict neutrality; but that, if they had confined themselves in Parliament to a dry declaration to that effect, without entering any further into the question, and without joining in the general disapprobation of the invasion of Spain by France expressed throughout the nation, they would have lost many of their supporters in Parliament; a loss which, upon a question of such importance, might very possibly have led to a change of Government. If then, as it

appeared, he had no fault to find with the acts of the Government, he ought not to quarrel with them for their language in Parliament, which should always be regulated so as to maintain their credit or influence with their party, so long as they can preserve these without abandoning their principles, and the measures which they may judge best for the public interests.

This is the substance of several conversations which I have had with Metternich respecting the conduct of his Majesty's Government upon the Spanish question. He always speaks of a change of Ministers as the greatest misfortune which could befal Europe; but whatever may be his real sentiments respecting the policy of the British Government, it is evident that both he, and those who are influenced by him, are of opinion that the policy of the nation is no longer what it was previous to the peace; and that the public meetings, subscriptions, and active interference of individuals in aid of revolution, wherever revolution is to be met with in Europe, betray, on the part of the British public, a disposition hostile to the old Governments and system of the Continent, which began to manifest itself at the termination of the war, and has ever since been gaining strength. The decline of Lord Strangford's influence at Constantinople is urged as a proof that, unless measures can be adopted for checking these proceedings in favour of revolution, Great Britain must necessarily lose much of her influence upon the Continent; as it must be the business of every State to guard itself against a mischief which, it appears, cannot be controlled by the Government and the country from whence it proceeds.

I hope you will not disapprove my having communicated to you confidentially the opinions held here, which I have thought fitter to be stated in a private letter than in a public despatch.

Believe me ever, my dear Canning,
Most truly and sincerely yours,
H. WELLESLEY.

(*Private.*)

Gloucester Lodge, Sept. 16, 1823.

MY DEAR H. WELLESLEY,

I am so far from 'disapproving' your having made a confidential communication to me of what has lately passed in your conferences with Prince Metternich upon the subject of our foreign policy, that I should have felt that you had not done fairly as a Minister, nor kindly as a friend, if you had not put me in possession of matter so important to me, both publicly and individually.

I should not have had the smallest objection to your making the same communication in a despatch; though I think you judged right in mentioning it to me in the first instance in a private letter. You will now judge from the answer which I give you in this form, how far it may be useful, or otherwise, to elicit the same answer (in substance, by a despatch addressed to me on the same subject) from the Secretary of State.

The pretensions of Prince Metternich in respect to this country, appear to me to be perfectly unreasonable; they must be founded on some strange misconception of our obligations, our interests, and our feelings.

Our obligations, I presume, are to be found in public treaties, making part of the law of Europe; or in diplomatic transactions between Court and Court. I am at a loss to discover in any one of those documents of either kind, whether patent, or recorded in the archives of the Foreign Office, any obligation binding this country either to interfere herself, or to assist, abet, or approve the interference of any other Powers by force or by menace in the internal concerns of independent nations. The specific engagement to interfere *in France*, in the specific case of an attempt upon the throne of that kingdom, by or in behalf of any branch of Buonaparte's family, is the single exception of which I am aware; and it is an exception so studiously particularized, as to prove the rule. The rule I take to be, that our engagements have reference wholly to the state of territorial posses-

sion settled at the peace; to the state of affairs between nation and nation; not (with the single exception above stated) to the affairs of any nation within itself.

If Prince Metternich has conceived other notions of the nature and effect of our engagements with foreign Powers, it is indeed highly desirable that he should enable you to state those notions to your Court precisely, and officially. I thought that the public declarations of my predecessor, in the circular at Laybach, and in the confidential memorandum respecting Spain, had set this question entirely at rest. But if any doubt still hangs upon it, let an opportunity be afforded to me of dissipating that doubt before new complications arise, which may make a practical, out of a speculative, difference. I do not indeed understand Prince Metternich to affirm (I rather understand him to acquiesce in your denial)—that we were bound by antecedent stipulations to take part with the Powers of the Continent against Spain. Yet if he so construed our general obligations, as by the general tenour of your report he seems to have done, he *ought*, consequently and *logically*, to have concluded us to be *bound*, in the case of Spain, to countenance, if not to aid, forcible internal interposition. But he does not so conclude. It is unnecessary, therefore, to argue that question. But it *is* necessary to say that *I*, on my part, and in my construction of our subsisting obligations towards each other, *do* conceive Austria to be bound to take care, in common with the Allies, that no permanent encroachment is made on the national independence of Spain, and no permanent aggrandizement acquired by France, in consequence of her forcible interposition. It would indeed be a strange perversion of all that was settled at the peace, that the treaties and engagements which we consider as providing for the state of territorial possession exclusively, should not only be construed to relate to the internal affairs of nations, *as well as* to their external safety (which we deny), but to relate to the former so much *more* than to the latter, that an encroachment upon national independence, which *per se* would have constituted a *casus fœderis*, and called for the assistance of

the Allies, should become not only innocent, but regular, if following as a consequence from internal interference. Yet this absurdity, as it appears to me, is the natural result of Prince Metternich's doctrines, if pushed to their extent. He contends in effect, if not in so many words, that the Alliance was framed against the dangers of internal revolution; he admits, I presume, that it was also framed against ambitious aggression from without. *We* contend that it was framed wholly against the latter danger, with the single excepted case of a Buonapartean revolution in France; and that exception was founded on the experience that such a revolution and external aggression were synonymous; and yet Prince Metternich expects of us not only neutrality (for that does not content him), but partiality to the invading Power, against the invaded, in a war originating in that construction of the obligations of the Alliance which we deny and disclaim; and tending manifestly (if not checked and controlled) to that very disturbance of the independence of nations, and of the settlement of Europe against which he admits the Alliance to have been intended to provide. If we have been neutral between France and Spain, it is not because we admitted the war to be the natural fruit of the Alliance, but because it is a war of two nations, with both of which we are in amity, and to neither of which we are bound by any obligation to take any part at all. But it *would* be our *interest* to prevent the aggrandizement of France at the expense of Spain; and to that object we acknowledge ourselves to be pledged, and contend that Austria, and Russia, and Prussia, are pledged equally with us by the Alliance. So much for our obligations and our interests. The Allies, we say, have no right, under the Alliance, to call upon us to aid or to abet a forcible interference in the internal affairs of any country, for the purpose, or under the pretext, of putting down extravagant theories of liberty. But *we have* a right to call upon *them*, as they upon us, to check the aggression of State against State, and to preserve the territorial balance of Europe. We abstained from taking any part in the war between France and Spain, because we were under no obliga-

tion to take any; and because, where no obligation exists, a Government is free without dishonour to consult the interest of the nation which it governs. But if France attempts conquest, interest and obligation point the same way; and the obligation in that case is confessedly common to us and to our Allies.

This is the plain state of the matter under our treaties and engagements: and no good can arise from attempting to perplex the plain letter of those instruments with constructions foreign to their meaning. But Prince Metternich appeals to our feelings, and warns us that we are losing the influence which we formerly possessed in Europe; and that, unless we mend our manners, it must be the business of every State on the Continent to guard itself against the mischief which our speeches in Parliament (with the exception of the Duke of Buckingham's) are creating.

Now as to our influence upon the Continent, if such a war as we sustained for (with a single intermission) a quarter of a century, in behalf of all Europe, and by turns *against* all Europe in its own behalf, has not taught all Europe where they are to look for protection against overgrown and overbearing power, I am sure no part that we could take in a Congress, upon an insurrection of Carbonari at Naples, or of Freemasons at Madrid, would acquire for us the confidence which such a war had failed to command. Let the occasion come, and Prince Metternich shall see! But it is not by perpetually creating occasions; it is not by incessant meddling with petty interests and domestic squabbles in other countries, that the influence of Great Britain is to be maintained. On the contrary, it is more likely to be frittered away by such restless exertion; and to be found exhausted, or disabled from acting, when real occasion may arise. Besides, what *is* the influence which we have had in the counsels of the Alliance, and which Prince Metternich exhorts us to be so careful not to throw away? We protested at Laybach; we remonstrated at Verona. Our protest was treated as waste paper; our remonstrances mingled with the air. Pretty influence! and much worth preserving! No—our

influence, if it is to be maintained abroad, must be secure in the sources of our strength at home: and the sources of that strength are in the sympathy between the people and the Government; in the union of the public sentiment with the public counsels; in the reciprocal confidence and co-operation of the House of Commons and the Crown. If Prince Metternich has taught himself to believe that the House of Commons is merely a clog and impediment to the free action of the counsellors of the Crown; that its prejudices are to be softened, its waywardness to be soothed, but that the tenor of the Government is in effect independent of its impulse—that it is, in short, to be managed, but not to be consulted—he is mistaken. It is as essential a part of the national council as it is of the national authority; and woe be to the Minister who should undertake to conduct the affairs of this country upon the principle of settling the course of its foreign policy with a Grand Alliance, and should rely upon carrying *their* decisions into effect by throwing a little dust in the eyes of the House of Commons. And yet this does appear to be what Prince Metternich considers as a possible course of conduct. And it is a point upon which you must allow me to say, my dear Wellesley, you have not (according to your own account) quite sufficiently exposed to him his error. From reading your part of the conversation, one might be led to suppose, that you had not wholly, and peremptorily discouraged the notion of Prince Metternich, that there was one language for the Cabinet, and another for Parliament; and that the speeches of Ministers were to be taken, rather as an echo of what they knew to be the sentiments of others, than as an exposition of their own. I grant to you, and to Prince Metternich, that Ministers and Parliament *may* originally take different views of a subject; and that for a time, as in every conflict of opinions, it may be doubtful which side shall convince the other. But if Parliament perseveres in its original view, the Ministers must adopt it, or retire. To carry on a system of his own adverse to that which Parliament has professed its willingness to sanction, in the hope

of being able to reconcile them to the parts, although he could not prevail with them to accept the whole—this would be a perilous enterprise, and as fruitless as perilous; fatal to his own power, and treacherous (in effect) to the hopes of his allies. But, in the case of Spain, there were no such differences of opinion to reconcile. The views of the Government were at once adopted by Parliament; and they have proved to be exactly conformable to the feelings of the nation. Prince Metternich would greatly deceive himself, if he imagined that it was *neutrality* only, and not the motives on which that neutrality was founded, and the qualifications with which it was accompanied, that Parliament and the nation approved.

I am as confident, as I can be of anything that has not actually happened, that such a neutrality as that of Laybach (however justifiable in the case itself) would have been distasteful both to Parliament and to the nation. It was not only the *language*, which was held by the Government therefore, but it was the firm belief that in that language they were sincere; it was not those speeches of Lord Liverpool and myself (which give Prince Metternich so much uneasiness), but it was the confidence in our *real* feeling of all that we expressed that satisfied the country; that induced them to consider our neutral position in the Spanish question as one chosen by ourselves, from a just regard for British interests, and not from a compliance with foreign dictation, or in enmity to national freedom. Prince Metternich must not suppose therefore (and I entreat you not to encourage him in supposing) that our language belied our sentiments; or that we had either of us any reserve or qualification, in our own minds, of the opinions which we declared to Parliament; or that, if Parliament and the nation had been absolutely without an opinion upon the subject, we should have held either a different language, or a different conduct with respect to Spain. Prince Metternich must take us such as we are, for better and for worse; and we are such as we *seem*, such as we profess ourselves to Parliament and to the world.

What measures the Austrian Minister may have in con-

templation, or may think necessary, for guarding against the infection of our doctrines or our example, I know not. Neither do I presume to suggest what measures may be best adapted to the support of absolute monarchy in that part of Europe in which it continues to flourish. I have no objection to its continuing to flourish where it is the growth of the soil; and where it contributes to the happiness, or to the tranquillity (which after all *is* the happiness) of a people. I would not less readily declare against any attempt to invade the Austrian dominions, for the purpose of overthrowing the Austrian Monarchy, than I did against the invasion of Spain for the purpose of abolishing the Spanish Constitution. But I do think it very unadvisable to force into conflict (as Prince Metternich appears resolved to do) the abstract principles of Monarchy and Democracy; and I do think (with that resolution) he could not have fought the battle of the monarchical principle to more disadvantage than in the person of Ferdinand VII. But that is *his* affair, not ours; and how he could ever expect to make it ours, I am at a loss to imagine. Our business is to preserve, so far as may be, the peace of the world, and therewith the independence of the several nations which compose it. Prince Metternich seems to think that there is no security for peace between nations, unless every nation is at peace within itself, and that pure monarchy is the charm on which such internal tranquillity depends. *We* think that the harmony of the political world is no more destroyed by the variety of civil institutions, in different states, than that of the physical world by the different magnitudes of the bodies which constitute the system; 'there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the stars,' and so forth; but Prince Metternich seems to be of opinion that all should be alike; he is even for trying his hand upon *us*—to make our glory as like to that of the sun and moon of the Continent as possible; but he had better leave us quiet in our own sphere, or we shall make most unharmonious music. The Austrian Minister prides himself, you say, upon being the champion and protector of ancient institutions, and the sworn irreconcileable enemy of revolution. I flatter myself that I am no more a lover of revolution than

Prince Metternich. I have certainly passed near thirty years in fighting for old institutions, in that House of Commons which Prince Metternich views with so much jealousy; but in which and *by* which, after all, revolution has been arrested, and what remains of old institutions has been saved. But I cannot shut my eyes to the real state of things. I cannot forget, nor should Prince Metternich, that in resisting the French Revolution in all its stages, from the Convention to Buonaparte, we resisted the spirit of *change* to be sure, but we resisted also the spirit of *foreign domination*. So long as these two spirits were leagued, the resistance to one animated that to the other. But, separate them, or (still more) array them against each other, and the most strenuous and most consistent anti-revolutionist may well hesitate which part to choose. But has Prince Metternich, have the Allies, never compromised with the Revolution? What! was not Fouché's Ministry the first fruits of their occupation of Paris? Personally I have no share in that transaction; and I certainly am not presumptuous enough to form a judgment upon a point, decided under such trying circumstances, by persons so much more competent than myself. But the admission of Fouché was clearly destructive of the moral with which the great tragedy of the Revolution ought to have closed. After that *admission*, it is in vain to deny that you have compromised with revolution; and it is vain, and it is not just after that compromise, to draw the line of demarcation between the opposite classes of politicians so precisely and so broadly as Prince Metternich is disposed to draw it. Even if I would have preferred another ten years of war to ending it with a compromise, yet the fact being, that it *was* so ended, with my consent, I surely am not at liberty now to proscribe and persecute all who maintain the opinions with which that compromise was made. I may not like things as they are (in this respect) much more than Prince Metternich, but they *are* so; I find them so; and I must deal with them as they are.

This is my answer to what Prince Metternich has said of the tendency of *our present* politics to encourage the spirit of revolution. It is *not* the fault of *our* politics. It is not the

fault of *present* politics. It is the fault (if it be a fault) of the politics which prevailed at the conclusion of the war.

I dare say there were good reasons for the compromise at the time: but it was one.

Now, my dear Wellesley, you may report, or read (if you will) to Prince Metternich as much as you think necessary of this long letter. I have spoken in it with perfect freedom, not greater however than I think his observations justify. If you find it expedient to repeat those observations in a despatch, I shall be prepared to answer them, substantially as here, though, of course, more guardedly in expression. But the end of all is this: Prince Metternich misconstrues the Alliance, when he considers it as directed to internal instead of external objects. He misconstrues us, if he supposes that we tacitly *agree* to a construction which we officially deny; or that our language in Parliament is not the sentiment of our councils. But he would misconstrue us quite as much, if he did not believe that we are sincerely desirous of maintaining the Alliance, and of cultivating it for its real object and purpose; that of preserving the settlement of Europe, and the independence of the states which it comprehends.

Ever, my dear Wellesley,
Most sincerely yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

Sir Henry Wellesley, &c. &c.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR CANNING, Vienna, Oct. 4, 1823.

I return you many thanks for your private letter of the 16th of September, and I shall take care to be guided by it in any future conversations which I may happen to be engaged in upon the subject to which it relates. I trust, however, that you will allow me to offer some explanation of certain passages in my own letter which appear to have made an impression upon your mind quite foreign to what I intended they should convey.

I am far from wishing to justify the policy of Prince Metternich; on the contrary, I think his alarms are unfounded, and the measures, of which he is a principal supporter, equally dangerous and unjustifiable. I must in fairness, however, to him declare, that in the several conversations which have passed between us upon the subject of Spanish affairs, he has invariably admitted that Great Britain could not do otherwise than observe a strict neutrality in the actual contest between France and Spain. He has indeed at no time pretended that Great Britain was in any degree bound, either by treaties or by other obligations, to interfere, or to assist the interference of other Powers, in the internal concerns of other nations. He perfectly understands the tenor of our engagements, as well as of those of the other members of the Alliance, to have reference wholly to the state of territorial possessions settled at the peace; nor has he ever (as I believe) conceived a notion of disputing the correctness of the principles marked out in the Laybach Circular, in as far as they regarded the engagements of Great Britain. He agrees with you in your construction of the obligations imposed by the Alliance in the case of Spain—viz. 'That Austria is bound to take care, in common with 'her Allies, that no permanent encroachment is made on the 'national independence of Spain, and no permanent aggran-'dizement acquired by France in consequence of her forcible 'interposition.' He is indeed so much of this way of thinking, that he has frequently said as an argument in support of the measures adopted by the Sovereigns in the actual state of affairs in Spain, that the presence and interference of their Ministers at Madrid must necessarily preclude France from pursuing views of aggrandizement in that country.

He certainly did object to our speeches in Parliament upon the Spanish question for the reasons stated in my letter of the 27th of August. He likewise lamented the public meetings, subscriptions, &c., in aid of Spain and Greece; but I do not believe that these complaints were made with any intention of endeavouring to fix upon Great Britain obligations more extensive than those by which she is bound by the treaties concluded at the peace.

Allow me to advert to that part of my letter which relates to the mode of managing the discussions in Parliament. Had this been a subject of discussion between Prince Metternich and me, upon which any important issue depended, I should perhaps have spoken with more reserve than I felt it necessary to do in confidential conversations, which were to lead to no practical result, and which could not, and I am sure he did not wish should, be considered as having an official character. I meant certainly to point out to Prince Metternich the necessity that Ministers were sometimes under of framing their speeches so as to reconcile the shades of difference of opinion which, upon particular questions, were often found to exist among their supporters in Parliament, although they might all have the same object in view. Nothing was stated by me by which it could be inferred that Ministers had one language for the Cabinet and another for Parliament; and, upon the re-consideration of the following passage of my letter of the 27th of August, I hope you will see that it does not admit of that construction. 'If then, as 'it appeared, he (Prince Metternich) had no fault to find with 'the acts of the Government, he ought not to quarrel with 'them for their language in Parliament, which should always 'be so regulated as to maintain their credit and their influ-'ence with their party *so long as they can preserve those* '*without abandoning their principles and the measures which* '*they may judge to be best for the public interests.*'

My intention was to describe to Prince Metternich what I believed to be the invariable usage upon great parliamentary questions; and although, as I have before stated, these conversations were entirely confidential, I did not think that I advanced anything which might not be publicly avowed. I have only to add my conviction that these conversations have left no impression upon Prince Metternich which you would not approve.

Believe me ever, my dear Canning,

Very sincerely yours,

HY. WELLESLEY.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SPANISH AFFAIRS — LETTERS TO SIR WILLIAM À COURT — FRENCH OCCUPATION OF SPAIN—RECOGNITION OF SPANISH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

IMMEDIATELY after Mr. Canning came into office in 1822, the affairs of Spain were brought under discussion at the Congress of Verona. The menacing attitude then assumed by the members of the Holy Alliance towards the new Constitutional Government at Madrid began to be a source of anxiety to that Government. In their alarm the Spanish Ministers sought support and countenance from Great Britain; but whilst asking for our good-will in Europe, the Spanish authorities in the New World were putting forth the most preposterous pretensions, the effect of which was to cripple and injure British commerce in the seas surrounding Spanish America. This complication of affairs is thus described by Mr. Canning to Sir William à Court:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR SIR, Foreign Office, Dec. 3, 1822.

I send you a large packet of important, but in some respects rather incongruous materials, out of which if you can construct for us a consistent and satisfactory system of relations with Spain, you will solve a most embarrassing difficulty. Our difficulty arises from the double character in which Spain presents herself in Europe and in America; fighting for her independence in the former, and in the latter exercising a tyranny, and assuming a tone of arrogance not

to be endured; proposing new ties of friendship here, and there prohibiting our accustomed intercourse; holding out her European hand for charity, and with her American one picking our pockets.

This difficulty will be greatly enhanced if the issue of the Congress should be (as all the rumours of Verona and of Paris describe it to be) a state of things, neither war nor peace, but *tending to war* between France and Spain. In that case it must be admitted that an attack by France on the side of the Pyrenees, coinciding in point of time with our operations in the West Indies, would produce an appearance of concert, utterly remote from the truth, indeed, but likely enough to impose upon Europe; and sure to be felt most deeply and resentfully by Spain.

To avoid this appearance would be a great object: but seriously and sincerely (you may assure the Spanish Minister) *it is not in our power* to avoid it, unless Spain will speedily, instantly, do us justice. Let the Spanish Government send off orders without delay to her Governors of Porto Rico and Porto Cabello (to Cuba, I trust, strict orders will already have been sent), and to her naval officers in the West Indies, to execute the projects for which our armament is destined. Let these orders (or duplicates of them) be sent hither, to be forwarded to our officers in those seas, and to be by them delivered to their several destinations; and they may, perhaps, yet be in time to prevent a blow being struck in anger; but there is no time to spare, and I assure you, and beg you to impress upon M. San Miguel, that the patience of our mercantile interest here is exhausted by the long series of injuries which they have endured.

How anxiously the D. of W. has contended against all projects hostile to Spain at Verona, the despatches which I enclose to you will partly show, but they show it only imperfectly.

With what success this contest has ended I am not yet able to say. I expect despatches, probably final, from the D. of W., on Thursday; and I will send off a messenger on Friday with the result. I leave to your discretion whether to open your instructions on the West Indian question fully to M. San Miguel, or not, before the arrival of Friday's

messenger; but I have already delayed sending them off, perhaps too long, in the hope of being able to accompany them with something decisive from Verona.

As to the question of mediation, the one thing that I have to say to you upon that is, Bring it to a point as speedily as possible one way or the other. Do not let the Spanish Minister suppose that, by keeping his decision in suspense, he can indefinitely suspend ours. This question too presses in point of time, but the other has clearly the precedency. Let Spain do us justice fully and handsomely, and so enable us to behave towards her with that singleness of conduct, which it is as much our desire, as it is her interest, that we should pursue.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.,

GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR SIR, Foreign Office, Dec. 29, 1822.

You will know many days before this messenger can reach you, that the French Government have at length taken their step; their continental allies having positively refused to retrograde. The agitation or vacillation, or both, of the French councils have been great; and they have ended in two contradictory results; the retirement of the Duke de Montmorency for being too warlike, and the sending a despatch to M. de Lagarde, signed by M. de Villèle; but differing in nothing (so far as I can make out from Sir Charles Stuart's report, and from M. de Marcellus's) from such a one as M. de Montmorency might have been contented to sign.

The practical difference between the French *measure* and that of the three other Powers, is perhaps a *little* wider than between their respective despatches. The Ministers of the three Powers are, I understand, to come away in fifteen days, if they have *no* answer to their several communications; (sooner, of course, if they have an unsatisfactory one); whereas the French Government appears to reserve to itself to judge upon the case, and though they hold out the threat of re-

calling their Minister, if—I do not exactly know what, nor do *they*—they yet intend to take their fifteen days, and perhaps a good many more, for deliberation before they cut off the means for negotiation, or renounce the hopes of peace. Spain, therefore, if she plays her game temperately, and if her Government *be* a Government, or if the means of making a Government exist in Spain, may yet avoid external attack. The cry of war from Petersburg will be no great annoyance if France is resolved not to act; it will be like the cry of 'Throw him over' in the two-shilling gallery, which generally proceeds from the remotest corner from that where the culprit sits, and is harmless enough so long as his immediate neighbours decline to give effect to it.

Not that—to do him justice—the Emperor of Russia is at all unwilling to come into the front row. On the contrary an army of 800,000 men, in the whole, and of 150,000 at least, in complete equipment for war, and quite ready to settle in Piedmont (that was his project) for the winter—is probably one of the governing motives of his policy.

But France is, I apprehend, as little disposed to open a passage for a Russian army to the Pyrenees, as Spain is to receive one beyond them; in short, war for the present seems out of the question, unless Spain provokes it.

But the menacing and feverish state of things, which arises from the continued existence of the French army of observation upon the frontiers, can only be remedied by some demonstration and assurances, on the part of Spain, of a sincere desire to render her revolutionary movements as little turbulent within, and as little obnoxious without, as possible. She may make *us*, without shame, the channel of these assurances; and among the demonstrations the most useful, though perhaps the most difficult, will be a temperate answer to the remonstrances of the continental Powers, or a silence without ill-humour.

The latter would probably puzzle their correspondents most, unless indeed the three Ministers should be ordered to *say*, that 'no answer' will be taken as a negative and a defiance.

In that case Spain must answer in her own defence, but then I trust temperately.

We are, as you see, most anxious that war should be avoided.

There can be no issue of a war between France and Spain that would not be disastrous in the extreme. A beaten or baffled French army, flowing back upon France, would infallibly set France in revolution—a new 'Iliad of woes' for Europe. The possession of the Peninsula, the occupation of it for three months by a French army, is an event which cannot be contemplated but as an equally infallible source of disquietude, and some way or other ultimately of war to this country. We are not insensible to other dangers, or rather to other miseries and misfortunes (for the danger to us, I think, is comparatively small), *that* may arise from the unchecked progress of revolution. But the attempt to check is sure to exasperate, and almost sure to fail in suppressing it. And geographically as well as morally, Spain is perhaps the country in which a revolution is most likely to burn itself out, without catching in other parts of Europe.

I need not say with what impatience and anxiety I look for your first despatches, after the receipt of mine upon M. de Colomb's overture.

Our West Indian expedition has sailed. But I find our naval commander in the West Indies had already taken upon himself, from the very necessity of circumstances, to do and threaten almost as much without orders, as his orders will now prescribe.

If the Spaniards are not wrong-headed; if they will do *us* justice, and enable us to plead for them without dishonouring ourselves; we may yet be the means of bringing all this confusion to an end.

But, if they misconstrue us; if they evince distrust instead of thankfulness, and deny to us the means of satisfying England upon points of English interest; they may depend upon it, that the sins of American Spain will not only enable but compel us to remain not only neutral, but indifferent to the fate of Spain in Europe.

I have the honour to be,
My dear Sir,
Very sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

The French invasion was not prevented. While its result was yet doubtful, Mr. Canning wrote the following private letter, as a guide for Sir William's conduct. The Cortes, with the King, had then withdrawn from Madrid to Seville:

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR SIR, Foreign Office, June 6, 1823.

Our present want of information from Seville would be exceedingly perplexing if our policy at this moment were not, in almost any imaginable contingency, to be quiet. We certainly shall not move in any direction on a *hint*, still less take upon ourselves the responsibility of initiating any proposals for accommodation.

Both parties have shown themselves so impracticable, while each had a confidence of complete success, that it is probably from partial reverses and chequered fortune only, that a reasonable disposition on either side can be expected to arise. And till such disposition is manifested, we can have nothing to do.

The French Government have been incessant in their suggestions to us, official and private — (1.) To advise the Spaniards to set Ferdinand free—*i.e.*, to surrender Ferdinand into *their* hands. (2.) To determine upon sending a Minister to Madrid. This latter proposition, however, has not yet been brought forward formally through Sir Charles Stuart, and has been rather insinuated than directly submitted by M. de Marcellus.

To the former proposition we have answered uniformly, as you see in my despatches to Sir Charles Stuart; and, as the French Government have lately relaxed their importunity upon it, we must suppose either that they have abandoned it, as hopeless, for the present, or that they hope to attain the same object by other means. Is it possible that the partial advance of their army beyond Madrid can be combined with some projected *coup de main* on Seville, for the carrying off of Ferdinand?

The second proposition will not be pressed upon us, in all

probability, until the presence of the Ministers of the Continental Alliance at Madrid shall have given the apparent countenance of the Great Powers to the new Regency. It may then, and I think it will, be pressed upon us by joint invitation.

I have thought it most advisable not to anticipate the discussion which must then arise; because in the ever-varying circumstances of the times, the most cautious forethought is liable to be altogether disappointed. I therefore do not frame any hypothetical instructions for your conduct. But it may be convenient to you to know beforehand, in confidence, the points on which such a discussion would turn.

The Allies, in concert with France, proceed on the assumption that Ferdinand is a prisoner. But they have assumed this all along; and what they now do, in accrediting Ministers to a Regency acting in his name during his *forced* absence and captivity, is in consistency with all their previous conduct.

We have been acting on the contrary *presumption;* for we *assume* nothing, but simply acquiesce in what is the apparent state of things. Were *we now*, therefore, to change our course, and to acknowledge the Regency, we should act inconsistently, and must be prepared to justify that inconsistency, either by acknowledging that we have been mistaken all along, or by alleging some new events or discovery as the motive of it.

It is unnecessary to argue the first of these alternatives. And for the second, what have we to allege that we did not know before?

That Ferdinand quitted Madrid for Seville against his will, we have never doubted. Nor do we doubt that he would prefer being a *Rey netto*, to the enjoying any, the most extensive prerogatives, under any, the most perfect of constitutions.

But though we believe all this, we have not acted in this belief; nor can a Constitutional Government do so. There would be no end of uncertainties and interferences, if we were to take upon ourselves to inquire into the degree of freedom or constraint under which all the Sovereigns of Europe may execute their functions; especially those among them who, having concurred avowedly in the limitation of

their power, are secretly, but nevertheless (like Ferdinand) notoriously, bent upon resuming the concessions which they have made. What should we have thought of an interference from foreign Europe, when King John granted Magna Charta? or of an interposition in the quarrel between Charles I. and his Parliament?

In either of these cases, or in any such case, the business of Foreign Powers is with *the King*, who, till he is actually deposed, represents the nation of which he is at the head. This principle was acted upon by all Europe in the French Revolution; they did not withdraw their Ministers from Paris —certainly *we* did not, till after the *déchéance* of the King extinguished the Power to which they had been accredited.

Such are the general arguments against acknowledging the separation of the King's authority from his person. But how much stronger against acknowledging another depository of that power in a Regency, erected under the superintendence or coercion of foreign arms? If Ferdinand is captive at Seville, is the Regency at Madrid a free agent?

If it be admitted that it is not so, but that, acting under *advice, we* are invited to be one of its *advisers*, would not our consent to this invitation open questions of the greatest delicacy and magnitude? And is not the first of those questions, whether, in thus recognising and countenancing the first result of the invasion, and aiding to give effect to it, we do not virtually and retrospectively sanction the invasion itself? Nay, do we not become as much parties to it as any of the continental Powers?

In putting you in possession of my opinions upon this most difficult and complicated question, I mean not to suggest to you the employment of these topics in any discussion that may be forced upon you (you will, of course, not court such a discussion with any party), but to guard you against saying, or admitting anything in a contrary sense.

Till you have instructions to the contrary, your place is with Ferdinand VII., except in the single instance of his being carried *out of the kingdom* by *any* party. Should such an event take place, you will, of course, decline accompany-

ing him, till you receive orders from your Court; and to wait those orders, you will proceed to *Gibraltar*. Your presence in Spain in an undefined character would be as inconvenient to yourself as to your Government. At the same time this being a case, I trust, not likely to occur, you will be careful not to mention your eventual destination to any one.

I anticipate it only because I would, as far as possible, prepare you for every contingency; but in any contingency for which I do not prepare you, I rely confidently upon your discretion, and you may depend upon my support.

Admiral Jabat* writes to his Government to *hold out;* and promises great things from hence in the way of arms and money, if they do so. I would not guarantee his engagements. If the Cortes do *not* hold out, they will be told how much support they have lost; but I would not have them reckon too sanguinely upon what they are to receive if they do.

This letter is written in haste, and by snatches, in the interval between two long sittings of the House of Commons, which is now in its fullest plague and pressure.

I must read it over before I sign and seal it.

Upon reading it over I find that I have omitted one main reason for not countenancing any state, the effect of which should be directly or by inference, to acknowledge the illegitimacy of the Government of Spain to which you have been accredited. I mean our convention. If the Government which concluded that convention were acknowledged by us to be illegitimate, its acts must fall to the ground.

This inference we can never sanction, nor will we suffer others to draw it and act upon it. But to keep our argument clear, we must beware of admitting the premises from which it might be logically drawn.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Your sincere and faithful Servant,

GEO. CANNING.

---

* The Spanish ambassador in London.

On the *déchéance* of Ferdinand at Seville and his forcible removal to Cadiz, Sir W. à Court retired to Gibraltar. When Ferdinand was released from the durance in which he was held, and was set free, Sir William rejoined the Court at Cadiz.

The complete triumph of the French essentially changed the position of Spain. The change more especially affected the relations between England, Spain and her American colonies. Spain was no longer independent; her fortresses and her resources were in the power of a French army.

On the last day of 1823 Mr. Canning writes on this subject to Sir William as follows:—

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR SIR, Foreign Office, Dec. 31, 1823.

It may seem singular that I should have so little to say to you at a moment when so many great interests are in a state of agitation; but, in truth, I *have* no other instruction to give to you than those, which you have anticipated, and which (for your justification and support rather than your guidance) I record in my principal despatch of this date. *Laissez faire, et laissez venir.* Pozzo may bustle and Ferdinand may swear; but sooner or later, if we are only quiet, and give no hold against us, things must go pretty much as we wish, or at least as we allow.

The Spanish American question is, essentially, settled. There will be no Congress upon it; and things will take their own course on that continent, which cannot be otherwise than favourable to us.

I have no objection to monarchy in Mexico—quite otherwise. Mr. Harvey's instructions authorize him to countenance and encourage any reasonable project for establishing it (project on the part of the Mexicans, I mean), even in the person of a Spanish Infanta. But as to putting it forward, as a project or proposition of ours, that is out of the question. Monarchy in Mexico, and monarchy in Brazil would cure the

evils of universal democracy, and prevent the drawing of the line of demarcation which I most dread—America *versus* Europe.

The United States, naturally enough, aim at this division, and cherish the democracy which leads to it. But I do not much apprehend their influence, even if I believe (which I do not altogether) in all the reports of their activity in America. Mexico and they are too neighbourly to be friends. In the meantime they have aided us materially. The Congress was broken in all its limbs before, but the President's speech gives it the *coup de grace.*

While I was yet hesitating (in Sept.) what shape to give to the declaration and protest, which ultimately was conveyed in my conference with P. de Polignac; and while I was more doubtful as to the effect of that protest and declaration, I sounded Mr. Rush (the American Minister here) as to his powers and disposition, to join in any step, which we might take, to prevent a hostile enterprise on the part of the European Powers against Spanish America. He had no powers; but he would have taken upon himself to join with us, if we would have begun by recognising the Spanish American States.

This we could not do, and so we went on without. But I have no doubt that his report to his Government of this *sounding* (which he probably represented as an overture) had a great share in producing the explicit declarations of the President.

I send you some copies of the memorandum, which you may use as your discretion suggests: it must not be published; but short of that it cannot be too generally known. Its date is most important; both in reference to the state of things which then existed, and in reference to the American speech which it so long preceded.

I have great pleasure in returning Lord Eliot* to you. He does credit to your report of him.

I desire him to suggest to you to furnish me with all imaginable means of contradicting all imaginable rumours of

* Present Earl of St. Germans.

intrigues, and treachery, &c. &c., which the emigrants from Cadiz are probably propagating here—though I do not hear them, in any distinct shape, nor shall I till they come out in the House of Commons You will say it requires a certain degree of guilt to be able to imagine the charge. You must do it as well as you can.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Very sincerely yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

This letter shows exactly the share which Mr. Canning had in originating that part of the message of President Monroe, which is so often confounded with what is called the 'Monroe Doctrine.'

Mr. Canning maintained that foreign Powers had no right, either directly or indirectly, to interfere forcibly, between Spain and her American colonies, and that they had consequently no right to aid Spain in her attempts to reconquer them.

The 'Monroe Doctrine' is essentially different. That doctrine is, that the 'unoccupied parts of America are no longer open to colonization from Europe.' This doctrine Mr. Canning resolutely denied, affirming, in opposition, not only that Spain had a perfect right to make whatever unaided efforts she chose, and was able to make, to regain the lost dominion over her revolted colonies; but that 'the United 'States had no right to take umbrage at the establish-'ment of new colonies from Europe in any such un-'occupied parts of the American continent.'

The unwise and vindictive conduct of Ferdinand when his authority was re-established, served but to increase the hatred towards him of the constitutional party. He accordingly entered into a convention for a portion of the French army remaining in Spain, and

occupying some of the most important fortresses. Mr. Canning, although aware that, under the then existing circumstances, an immediate evacuation could not reasonably be expected, nevertheless keenly felt it as a disparagement to England, that Spain should be in military possession of France.

Hence arose the speedy recognition of the independence of the Spanish colonies by Great Britain. The first step which was taken respecting that measure is shown by the following document:—

Foreign Office, July 23, 1824.

Your Majesty's confidential servants having taken into their most serious consideration the present state of the question relating to the provinces of Spanish America which have established, more or less completely, their existence *de facto*, as independent States, have come to the following opinion, which they humbly lay before Y. M.

They humbly solicit, in the first place, Y. M.'s attention to the annexed papers.

1st. Extract of an official note addressed, in June, 1822, by the late Lord Londonderry to the Spanish Minister at Y. M.'s Court.

2nd. Extract of the instructions proposed a few weeks after by Lord Londonderry for himself, as Y. M.'s plenipotentiary at Verona, and subsequently transferred to the Duke of Wellington.

3rd. Extract of the Duke of Wellington's memorandum, delivered at the Conference at Verona in November, 1822, in execution of this part of his instructions.

4th. Extract of a despatch from the Duke of Wellington upon the same subject.

5th. Copy of a despatch from Mr. Canning to Sir Wm. à Court, dated in January, 1824, which comprises a summary of the steps taken, and of the declaration made on this subject by Y. M.'s Government since the breaking up of the Congress at Verona.

From a review of all these papers Y. M.'s servants are of opinion that every step which has been taken, and every declaration which has been made in this matter during the last two years, have been in strict conformity to the principles announced to Spain in June, and to the Allies in November, 1822; and that so far is the advance, which has been made in it up to this period from having been precipitate or hasty, that considering, on the one hand, the altered situation of Spain through the occupation of her territory by a French army, and considering, on the other hand, the altered state of the Spanish American provinces through the recognition which they have obtained from the Government of the United States of America,—considering also the influence which that Government is likely to acquire in all those countries, and the special commercial advantages which it has acquired in some of them in consequence of that recognition; the progress of Y. M.'s Government in this important question has been marked with singular caution and forbearance.

By the successive steps and declarations recorded in the several papers now again brought under Y. M.'s notice, Y. M.'s Government have arrived at a position in which it becomes their duty to offer their humble opinion to Y. M. as to what it may be now fit to do with respect to any of the countries in question in whose territory the struggle with Spain is entirely at an end, and the possession become 'complete on the part of the local Government'—an opinion, in the formation of which they are guided by a due consideration—

1st. Of the interests of Y. M.'s subjects.

2nd. Of the degree in which each such country has completed the establishment of its real independence, and of a reasonably secure form of Government.

3rd. Of the danger which might accrue to Europe, and to civilized 'society if so large a portion of the world should 'continue much longer without any recognised political rela-'tions' with the Old World; and exclusively connected with the *one* State to which they are already indebted for recognition.

Of the five great divisions into which Spanish America is distributed—Peru, Chili, Mexico, Columbia, and Buenos Ayres—it is to be observed that—(1.) In Peru a struggle still continues on behalf of the mother country. Peru is therefore, for the present, wholly out of consideration. (2.) Of Chili our information is very imperfect; (3.) and of Mexico as yet unsatisfactory. (4, 5.) It is as to the last two of the five divisions, Columbia and Buenos Ayres, that the question of some immediate advance towards a more direct diplomatic relation naturally and necessarily arises.

Y. M.'s servants are not altogether agreed as to the fitness of making such an advance directly and immediately towards Columbia. It appears to some of them that the expedition of General Bolivar, the President of the Columbian Government, into Peru, may, in its possible results, be productive of great hazard to the tranquillity and even to the present political institutions of Columbia; and those of them whose minds are *not* influenced by that apprehension, are nevertheless contented to abstain, for the present, from pressing a decision, and to wait for further intelligence.

But as to Buenos Ayres there does not appear to be any such circumstance of disqualification.

The long period which has elapsed, not only since that State declared its separation from Spain, but since a single Spanish soldier has existed within its territory; the total absence of any political party in favour of the mother country, the settled state of the Government, and its consequent capacity to maintain any political relations which may be contracted with it, the extent of the commerce of Buenos Ayres with this country, the number of Y. M.'s subjects actually established in that State, and the importance of fixing the character of this extensive commercial intercourse by some formal diplomatic arrangements; all these considerations have satisfied Y. M.'s servants that they best perform their duty in humbly advising Y. M. that the time is arrived for taking some decisive step towards the establishment of relations with Buenos Ayres.

Y. M.'s servants, therefore, humbly propose that a full

power should be sent to Mr. Parish to negotiate a commercial treaty with the State of Buenos Ayres.

Such a treaty, *when ratified by Y. M.*, would amount to a diplomatic recognition of the State with which it had been concluded; and Mr. Parish might, in that case, remain at Buenos Ayres with the character of Y. M.'s Minister Plenipotentiary.

The recognition of the independence of Buenos Ayres settled the principles on which England meant to act respecting the revolted colonies of Spain. This Minute was not carried in the Cabinet, without considerable opposition from the high Tory section of it. The struggle unhappily created some heartburning between the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Canning. That this was the case is shown by the following letter.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Gloucester Lodge, Oct. 17, 1824.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I send for your perusal a correspondence with the D. of W. upon the subject of my proposed visit to Granville at Paris.

I am not so bent upon that project as to insist upon executing it against grave and substantial reasons; but I did not choose to yield to representations of which I cannot at all acknowledge the justness.

I resisted the more, because I know that the whole truth was not told to me.

I *know* that the first letter in this series was written after a long conference with the King—which took place on Saturday, the 2nd, two days after my interview with his Majesty, after my return from Ireland. *I know*, that in that conference the K. repeated to the D. of W. what had passed in my interview—because the D. of W. repeated it to a person, who repeated it to my informant.

I know that the letter of the 5th was shown to the K.

before it was sent to me; and yet, neither in that letter, nor in any subsequent part of the correspondence is there any admission that the K. was privy to it.

Now this I hold not to be fair.

I have the highest respect for the D. of W., and I do not presume to limit the confidence of the K.

But when one finds that all that passes between the K. and one's self is repeated as matter of course to a third person; and that third person one, who thinks himself at liberty to repeat it to others—at the same time that he conceals the fact of his knowing it from one's self, it is high time to look about one, and to beware of what Burke calls 'traps and mines.'

I have a more immediate project of getting out of town for a few days to Ickworth.

We were to have gone to-morrow, but I am detained by a council at Windsor on Tuesday, on which occasion I have to present the new Prussian Minister and his credentials.

I hope to get away on Wednesday, and propose staying with Lord Bristol as far as I can into the following week.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—Westmorland did not ask, nor have a private audience of Charles X. What passed was *aside*, at a public reception. He repeated to me Charles X.'s speech on Spanish America, but not his own answer.

It would not be consistent with an honest discharge of the task which I have undertaken, were I to withhold the preceding letter. It is a matter of notoriety no less than of regret, that there should have been, at the end, a separation between two men, so patriotic and so great, who had long sat together in the same Cabinet. But it would be obviously unfair to Mr. Canning's memory, in a work of this sort, to conceal the grounds on which he considered he had cause of complaint against the Duke.

In the autumn of 1824 Sir Charles Stuart retired from the embassy at Paris. He was replaced by Lord Granville, an old and intimate friend of the Foreign Secretary.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Ickworth, Nov. 15, 1824.

I have this instant received your little scrap of Thursday evening announcing your arrival at Paris.

I am unwilling that to-morrow's mail should go without an acknowledgment of it. But I shall send you nothing official to-day. You may look for something of that nature by the mail of Friday next.

In the meantime, however, I may as well explain to you, that all that is necessary to be kept in mind by you at present, and what is to form the main topic of your conversation with M. de Villèle,* and (when you have opportunities) with the King, is that we are perfectly willing, and desirous to be on a footing of the most entire and unreserved confidence with France; but that confidence must be *reciprocal.* To explain our own views on every subject, and to get nothing, or (worse than nothing) something that we find not to be relied upon, in return, is a plan of conduct which it is neither useful, nor becoming to pursue. It is dupery in the beginning, it would be humiliation in its continuance, and must lead to anything but good understanding in the end.

Such, however, has been the plan upon which France would fain have had us proceed, with respect to both the subjects to which you particularly advert as those on which you hope to find ample instructions—Spanish America, and Greece. As to the former, we really have nothing to say that is not already known to all the world. But it was *because* I found that there was no relying safely on anything that the French Government said to us of *their* views and intentions on that subject; it was *because* I found them holding different languages to different Powers, that I resorted to

* The French Premier.

publicity, and gave to the world the conference with Prince Polignac; a disclosure which (I admit) sealed the fate of the question, and which must rule all our future steps in the progress of it.

We would, we might, have understood each other on that question at the outset, if France had had the openness (or the courage) to declare with us against a Congress. But her object was to keep well with both parties (I mean with the Alliance, and with us); to take credit with the Alliance; to wheedle us into a Congress; and to wheedle us into it by promising to side with us when once fairly *in*. Publication cut the knot of this twisted policy, and from that moment it would have been nonsense to think of confidence between France and us, as to Spanish America.

Hence the whole conduct of France upon that question since that moment has been unsteady and uncertain; and of necessary consequence false. Its duplicity has been made still more evident by the variance of language between Villèle and Polignac: either from their really not knowing what language to hold, or from Polignac's inclining to a more *ultrageous* policy than Villèle would commit himself to support.

As one proof out of many, take the following. Some day towards the end of July, Polignac called on Planta (I happening to be out of town at the Eton Speeches), and remonstrated in a very high tone against my frequent communications with the Spanish American agents in this country. At that very instant, I had the certain knowledge that Villèle had invited one of those very agents over to Paris; and that Polignac, if he had not already received, would shortly receive, orders to give him a passport. So I told Polignac in a letter which I addressed to him, in consequence of his foolish talk to Planta. He neither admitted nor denied the fact; but not many weeks after (before I went to Ireland, I am pretty sure) M. Hurtado, the Columbian agent, went with Polignac's passport to Paris.

I saw him before his departure, and charged him with a message to Villèle. I have seen him since his return, but he has not brought me any message from Villèle.

Now the folly of all this is equal to its knavery. If the object is to deceive, that object is not attained. I know M. de Chateaubriand's agents in South America pretty nearly as well as M. Villèle. The French have a perfect right to send agents there; who disputes it? But why do they insist upon doing that clandestinely which they might do like us, in the face of day? And why have they preferred taking all the measures which they have taken, and are meditating as sequels and counteractions of our measures, rather than concerting with us a line of conduct which they might with us have avowed, and justified in the face of all the world? The answer is one—and simple. Fear of Russia. That is the spring, not of their actions (for they do things which they know that Russia disapproves, because they think it their interest to do them), but of the timidity and furtiveness with which they act in everything that is not dictated to them by the Holy Alliance.

I am not at all sorry to be disembarrassed of their co-operation: but I have solicited it anxiously and sincerely; not because I thought that it would be any help to us in this particular case, but because I should have been glad to make a beginning of a close and separate good understanding between us and France; on which, more than on any other political combination, the permanency of peace depends. For though I speak of Chateaubriand as the parent of the tortuous system of policy, and am very willing that Villèle should throw all the blame of it upon his ousted colleague, yet I fear—I very much fear—that Villèle himself is radically tricky, and that he would rather come by the same end through a roundabout and intricate path, than through a straightforward one.

This being my opinion, I state it to you at the beginning of your relation with Villèle; I shall be very glad if you find me wrong; or can make me so (if I continue obstinate) by reforming M. de Villèle: but what I have said will put you sufficiently on your guard to prevent premature *epanchements* on your side; and to preserve you from the egregious mistake into which Stuart has fallen, that Villèle

was disposed to pour himself out in unrestrained sincerity to the British ambassador.

He will do no such thing. He hates Pozzo, I have no doubt, but he dreads him. He knows that Pozzo is intent upon displacing him, and probably has instructions to that effect (just as in 1823 Polignac and Esterhazy had orders here, *de faire sauter M. C.*): and M. de Villèle has the reputation of being pre-eminently among Ministers tenacious of office (even to a degree, to which the glutinous adhesiveness of W——d is no more than a parallel). He will not offend Pozzo mortally—no, not at the moment that Pozzo is plotting his overthrow. England, M. de Villèle well knows, will neither urge his removal, nor interfere for his support. And though, if his hands were free and his seat firm, I have little doubt that he would loosen the shackles in which the Holy Alliance hold him; and though he gives us now and then to understand that he thinks France and England necessarily bound together, as the constitutional minority, in the Grand Alliance, it will be a long time indeed before he will gain sufficient courage to push the principles of that union into active opposition to the majority.

Ever, my dear Granville, &c.,

GEORGE CANNING.

At the close of the year, further steps were taken with respect to other of the Spanish American colonies.

(*Memorandum of Cabinet.*) Dec. 7, 1824.

Present.—The Lord Chancellor, Lord Westmorland, Duke of Wellington, Lord Bathurst, Lord Liverpool, Lord Melville, Lord Bexley, Mr. Peel, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Wynn, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Canning.

It is the opinion of the Cabinet, that the question of any further step to be taken towards the Spanish American States should be decided without reference to the opinions and wishes of the Continental Allied Powers.——*Pro.* All but one.

It is the opinion of the Cabinet, that in deciding that

question, it is not obligatory upon us to have further reference to the wishes and opinions of Spain.——*Pro.* All.

It is the opinion of the Cabinet, that the question of any further such step is to be decided, in respect to each of the Spanish American States, only by a consideration of the existing situation of each of those States, external and internal, and of our own interests, at the time when the question, in respect to each, is to be decided.——*Pro.* All.

(*For Circulation.*)

December 12, 1824.

In the Memorandum which Mr. Canning circulated, previously to the first meeting of the Cabinet, he mentioned, as a circumstance, telling perhaps in some degree on the permanent occupation of Cadiz by France, that the Ultra-party in France had their eyes steadily fixed upon Ireland.

Of the truth of this circumstance he has had no doubt for some months past; but he confesses he was not prepared for the ostentatious disclosure of it in the *Etoile*, the organ of the Ultra-party in France; from a number of which, just received, the following is an extract:—

'——La position de l'Irlande interesse toute l'Europe.

'Nous pouvons dire que la question de l'emancipation des 'Catholiques est une question Européenne. S'il arrivait des 'malheurs en Irlande, comme il en arrivera certainement si 'l'en n'accorde point l'emancipation, toute l'Europe pourrait 'en être ébranlée; car si jamais une guerre civile a lieu en 'Irlande, elle se communiquera à l'Angleterre, où se trouve 'des hommes avides de revolution.

'Si l'Angleterre etait troublée, le Continent en souffrerait. 'La tranquillité de la Grande Bretagne est nécessaire *pour le 'repos de la France*, et celui de toutes les nations Européennes. 'Ainsi nous croyons devoir faire tous nos efforts, pour de-'montrer le danger qu'il y a de jeter dans le désespoir une 'population de sept millions d'hommes, qui, une fois soulevée, 'pourrait défier toute la puissance Britannique.'

Mr. Canning has taken the liberty to underline the expression, which is *identical* with that employed by the French

Government to justify the invasion and conquest, and now the retention, of Spain.

Naples, Piedmont, Spain, Ireland! who shall draw the line, if the principle of 'European question' be once admitted?

G. C.

Foreign Office, Dec. 14, 1824.

Mr. Canning humbly reports to Your Majesty—

That *Your Majesty's* confidential servants, in examining the several points in the foreign affairs of this country which call for most immediate attention, have thought it right to take into one connected view the state of our relations with France, with Spain, and with Spanish America.

The accompanying paper on Spanish America was prepared by Lord Liverpool, and circulated by him amongst his colleagues, before the answer to the inquiries which Lord Granville was instructed to make of the French Ministers with respect to the prolonged occupation of Spain, had been received.

To that paper Mr. Canning humbly begs leave to refer Y. M. for a statement of the reasons which would appear to render it incumbent upon Y. M.'s Government with a view to British interests, and without reference to any extrinsic considerations, to make some further advance towards the establishment of more definite relations with the new States of Spanish America.

The reasoning of Lord Liverpool's paper is in strict conformity with that of the Minute, which was humbly submitted to Y. M. in July, humbly recommending a step to be taken towards the recognition of the State of Buenos Ayres.

It is in conformity with the speech delivered by Y. M. from the throne at the opening of the last session of Parliament. Mr. Canning takes the liberty of subjoining a memorandum of the opinions of Y. M.'s servants, on the chief practical questions arising out of Lord Liverpool's paper.

The considerations which influenced Y. M.'s servants in the advice humbly tendered by them to Y. M. in the month of July, so far as they related to the United States of America, are strengthened by the lapse of time.

The connexion, between the Government of the United

States and those of Mexico and Columbia, has been improved and consolidated during that interval. An Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary had been already sent from the State of Columbia to the United States; but it is only by the last mail from Washington that we learn the arrival there of a Minister with the like character from Mexico; with which State more particularly, from its local situation, the growing intimacy and influence of the Cabinet of Washington is to be expected.

So far as the occupation of Spain by the French army was considered by Y. M.'s servants in July as affecting the situation of Spain in respect to Spanish America, that consideration, it cannot be denied, has acquired greater weight from Lord Granville's account of his late conferences with the French Ministers.

The intention is plainly avowed of occupying the Spanish fortresses for a time, of which the French Ministers do not specify the probable duration. No former military occupation has stood on so loose a ground. The occupation of France by the Allied Armies was for the term of five years at the utmost, liable to be shortened, but on no account to be prolonged. The occupations of Piedmont and of Naples were for a term definite, but renewable. The occupation of Spain had hitherto been of the latter description. But the duration of it is henceforth absolutely indefinite; and is declared by M. Damas to be dependent 'entirely upon the will and pleasure of either party.'

Y. M.'s confidential servants cannot conceal from themselves or from Y. M. that, to accept as satisfactory an explanation importing (on whatever grounds) an *indefinite* military occupation by France of the principal ports and arsenals of Spain, would be inconsistent with those principles of policy which, at the beginning of the last century, engaged this country in a war, to prevent the placing a Bourbon on the Throne of Spain; with those principles which dictated the secret article of the treaty between Y. M. and Spain in 1814, stipulating against the renewal of any 'engagement between Spain and France of the nature of the family compact;' and with those which induced Y. M. at the breaking out

of the war between France and Spain, to qualify Y. M.'s declaration of neutrality with the condition that 'France should not attempt anything like a *permanent* occupation of Spain.'

Y. M.'s servants do not mean to lay wholly out of account the arguments and assurances of the French Ministers. But when M. de Villèle mentions the burden of the expense as a motive for their wishing to withdraw their army, it is impossible not to reflect that, great as that burden was while the army was spread over the whole face of the country, it must be considerably reduced by the reduction of numbers, and by the more compact compass of the present scheme of occupation; while the advantages to France are by the same process rendered more available and more apparent. When it is said that no progress has been made in tranquillizing Spain by the presence of the French army, and that a civil war would burst out from one end of the kingdom to the other so soon as that army should be removed; it cannot fail to occur that the French were warned (as M. de Villèle admits) by the Duke of Wellington, that their success in tranquillizing Spain would be precisely what it has turned out to be, and that their retreat from that kingdom would be as difficult as they now profess to find it; but that it was fairly and publicly notified to them at the same time, that they could not make anything like a *permanent* stay there without exciting the just jealousy of England.

If the stay of the French army in Spain is to be commensurate with the existence of elements of discord in that unfortunate country, the present generation at least must pass away before the Spanish fortresses will be in other than French hands.

Y. M.'s confidential servants, however, do not mean, under all the conflicting considerations and perplexing difficulties of the case, humbly to recommend to Y. M. to take any other notice at present of the explanations received from the French Government than such as may be sufficient to preserve whole and unimpaired Y. M.'s unquestionable right to protest against the continuance of the French occupation of Spain, whenever the circumstances of the time may render such a protest advisable.

But, whatever may be the extent of Y. M.'s forbearance in this respect, or whatever may be the weight assigned to the arguments, or the faith reposed in the assurances of the French Government as to their intention of ultimately evacuating Spain, Y. M.'s servants cannot altogether overlook the political consideration and preponderancy, which France acquires during her prolonged occupation, from her possession of the fortresses, the ports and arsenals of Spain.

Those advantages may be incidental and involuntary, but they are real. They may not be the motives of the occupation, but they are the consequences of it. And Y. M.'s servants are humbly of opinion that care must be taken by Y. M.'s Government to counteract any mistaken impression as to the motives of Y. M.'s forbearance.

France pursues an object, which she deems to be connected with her interests and her safety; but at the known risk of a collision with the feelings of the British nation, to which the prolonged possession of Cadiz by France (however justified) cannot fail to be highly displeasing.

That the motives of Y. M.'s acquiescence in such a state of things (for such time as Y. M. shall think fit) may not be misapprehended, it seems to Y. M.'s servants more than ever necessary and advisable, on your part, to go on straightforward in the steady pursuit of British interests, without deference for the feelings of France or of any other Power.

Towards Spain herself every measure of delicacy and forbearance has been already exhausted. Were we even disposed to appeal to her again, we learn from the testimony of the French Government, that any such appeal would be vain. It is assigned by M. de Villèle, as one of the grievances of France against H.C.M. and his subjects that, upon every question relating to Spanish America, the Monarch and the nation are alike inaccessible to reason.

That consistently with the situation in which Spain is placed by the indefinite occupation of her strong places by the arms of a foreign Power, she cannot be considered as a free agent, and that, of course, Spain is essentially French in her foreign policy, it becomes our duty to prevent Spanish

America from being brought within the same subjection, are points which appear to your servants to be so conclusively argued in Lord Liverpool's paper, that it would be unpardonable to trouble Y. M. with any further discussion of them.

Upon these grounds Y. M.'s servants have come to the opinion that it is their duty humbly to advise Y. M.

That steps should be forthwith taken towards establishing relations between this country and the States of Mexico and Columbia, in the same manner, and to the same extent, as in the case of Buenos Ayres.

His Majesty acceded to the recommendation of his servants, and the steps in question were taken without loss of time.

(*Most private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Gloucester Lodge, Dec. 17, 1824.

You will learn from another source (and therefore I need not tell you in detail) what a campaign I have been going through. I am really quite knocked up by it; and the *Sot Privé*,* if he wished to avenge the Alliance by giving me a bilious fever, has very nearly had his revenge. I was very unwell yesterday: but I put off the Cabinet, and stayed quietly at home, and read *Baron Fain*, instead of working at my daily toil; and by this process (with other necessary helps) I am well again to-day, and prepared for the last of our Cabinets, to which I shall to-day submit my despatch to your Excellency on Spain, and then take leave of the members, the 'Sot' included, with more pleasure than I met them.

The fight has been hard, but it is won. The deed is done. The nail is driven. Spanish America is free; and if we do not mismanage our matters sadly, she is English, and

Novus sæclorum nascitur ordo.

You will see how nobly Liverpool fought with me on this occasion.

* 'Sceau Privé,' a Paris joke.

I will settle all the details of the measure, while the 'Sot' is Christmasing—and then join Liverpool at Bath.

This thing achieved, indeed, it matters not whether I go out of town or out of office; for it was the one thing needful in the present state of the world. And I most assuredly would have gone out of office, if I had been thwarted in it.

You will perhaps be surprised to hear that *this* result of the Cabinets of December was anticipated confidently in some quarters. The enclosed paper, which you must return to me, will show you how strongly this anticipation was felt, and how incautiously it was communicated. A second paper, which I add, will lead you to the knowledge of the writer of both. Indeed, you have a person at hand who has seen the first, and therefore can tell you his name.

The disappointment is proportionable to the expectation.

Now, you will understand why I set you upon Damas and Villèle for the answer about Spain. You see the use that it has been turned to in the Minute. It was no less useful in discussion.

We—that is L. and I—had made up our minds to be satisfied with Mexico. But your despatch enabled us to carry Columbia too.

Now that it has done its work, I do not want to persecute Villèle with this question, nor to get any ill-humour into the discussion. If I could be persuaded *in my own mind* that he is honest about it, I would not scruple to help him as I did last year: but he must furnish me with good, sound, substantial assurances. Above all, let the King's speech on the opening of the Chambers be explicit as to the *purpose* of withdrawing when practicable. Cannot you see Villèle before the day of opening, and suggest this? Do—as amicably as you please; and from *me*, if you think that will do any good. We knew each other, and liked each other, I thought, when he (and I too) were Ministers, *sans portefeuille*, in 1820.

Tell him that I meant to have accompanied Mrs. C. [to Paris], for the express purpose of renewing that acquaintance (as well as *pour faire ma cour au Roi*), but that it was

apprehended that other Powers would have fancied deep designs, and would have been jealous of the approximation.

When you have occasion to speak to Villèle of Stratford's* mission to Petersburgh, tell him that I prohibited S. from going by Paris, solely on account of Pozzo. We owe Pozzo no confidence; and Stratford being intimate with P., it would have been placing him (S.) in a very embarrassing situation to send him through Paris to Petersburgh, with orders not to communicate with his friend, and that friend the Russian ambassador.

You may see into Buzzanquy's† inside. Planta shall write to tell him so.

Now I must have done, for my colleagues are assembled. 'Le Sot's' voice is heard. Adieu!

Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

G. C.

P.S.—I find I have said all this about Pozzo before. But no matter—*you* cannot repeat it too often.

G. C.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

My dear Liverpool, Foreign Office, Dec. 28, 1824.

There is a fatality attending Irish prosecutions. After having passed over whole volumes of pure, unsophisticated domestic sedition, they have now fixed upon one sentence for prosecution in which the leading element is *foreign;* and precisely of that sort of which it was the most inexpedient (as one should have thought the most general view of things must have taught them) and (from the peculiar circumstances of the time which they did not know, is also) the most embarrassing to us, to be brought into public discussion.

I cannot believe that a verdict would have been obtained, if Cromwell or Buonaparte had been the name, instead of Bolivar; but with Bolivar the chance is nothing.

---

* Mr. Stratford Canning. † Bosanquet's.

My fear was that the Attorney-General (whose powerful understanding has, I think, this fault, that it looks only straightforward to its object, and does not take in side views of circumstances), would fly out against rebellion and Bolivar.

I have therefore written to Lord W. the letter of which I enclose a copy. I meant to have sent you this copy before, but forgot it. I am reminded of it by hearing from the Cottage that our Royal Master and the D. of W. are chuckling at the scrape into which our Spanish American politics have got us by this selection of a sentence for prosecution.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

(*Secret.*)

Foreign Office, Dec. 29, 1824.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

I omitted to mention to you yesterday that our Royal Master had been struck with the same awkwardness in the coincidence of O'Connell's prosecution with the recognition of Columbia. I had heard this before; but Peel has just told me that the D. of W. had written to him (P.) to let him know that the feeling was at work in the Royal mind: and that it was probable that his Majesty might give vent to it in a letter to him (Peel).

No such letter is yet come. By addressing it to Peel it might have been inferred that the King thought the prosecution wrong, and wished it to be dropped. Not a bit. From what the D. of W. writes, Peel collects, that the inconsistency would, in His Majesty's judgment, be best cured by dropping the recognition.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

CHAPTER XXV.

DISCUSSIONS RESPECTING THE RECOGNITION OF SPANISH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE — MR. CANNING'S LETTER TO THE KING.

THE recognition of the independence of the Spanish American Colonies was not carried (as shown in the last chapter) by Mr. Canning, without very considerable opposition. The colleague most opposed to the measure was the Duke of Wellington. The step was also very distasteful to the King, who was pressed with assurances that its effect would be to destroy friendly relations with our continental allies. At the same time the decision afforded evidence that Mr. Canning's influence predominated amongst his confidential servants—a result which was by no means congenial to the Royal mind.

In the second volume* of the *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.*, by the Duke of Buckingham, a letter to his Grace's late father from Mr. Charles Williams Wynn (then a Cabinet Minister), contains the following paragraph:—

Jan. 28, 1825.

I wish that I had an opportunity of verbal communication with you; but there have been steps to revive the discussions of December last, proceeding wholly from *foreign* influence, which, to my mind, manifested a decided wish to break up the Government. Fortunately there is at present

* Page 200.

such an unanimity in the course to be pursued, that I think nothing can be done, and the mover of the discord must succumb.

The steps to which Mr. Wynn alludes are shown by the following correspondence:—

(*From the King.*)

The line of policy pursued by the King's Government under the King's direction at the close of the late war, which terminated under such happy circumstances, was unanimity of co-operation with the great continental Powers, not only for the purpose of putting an end to the then existing hostilities, but for preserving the future tranquillity and peace of Europe.

The late Lord Londonderry, in conjunction with the Duke of Wellington, so effectually accomplished this great and desirable object, that this country took a position that she had never before held.

The King supposes it will not be denied, that the anarchy produced throughout the world by the French Revolution has left us a record so instructive, that the councils of the British Government should never fail to be regulated by the wholesome remembrance of that terrible event.

That we should, therefore, regard with the most anxious suspicion every attempt to revive the example of British America, which ended, unhappily for Great Britain, in a separation from the mother country.

France *treacherously* assisted that rebellious successful enterprise, and by her fatal policy gave the first impulse to that revolution which entailed for a quarter of a century such complicated misery on the whole of Europe.

The revolutionary spirit of past years, although lulled and suspended, is by no means extinguished; and it would be wisdom to look to the ultimate consequences which the result of our intended recognition of the independence of the South American provinces may probably produce on the evil and discontented, who are controlled, even at this

moment, with difficulty by the established power of regular Governments.

Let us also look at home, and observe the dangerous attempts which the active firebrands of Ireland are at this time pursuing, under the deceptive pretence of Catholic Emancipation.

The rebellious and organized schemes, so actively afloat in that unhappy country, are only a part of the same system, promoted by the same evil spirit, which gave rise to the calamities of the French Revolution.

The Liberalism of late adopted by the King's Government appears to the King to be a substantial part of that creed which was hailed in the House of Commons in those revolutionary days, when it required all the talent and firmness of the late Mr. Pitt to put it down; and the support which that great statesman received from the King's revered and excellent father, gave him the opportunity of using his great ability with such effect as enabled him successfully to resist the desolating storm.

The King has been long aware that the principles promulgated by the King's early friends were, at that period, the bane which threatened the destruction of our happy Constitution, and with it our internal peace and happiness; and if the King withdrew himself from his early friends for the good of the country, can the present Government suppose that the King will permit any individuals to force upon him at this time a line of policy of which he so entirely disapproves, and which is in direct opposition to those wise principles that the King's Government has for so many years supported, and uniformly acted upon.

The King would wish to ask Lord Liverpool whether he supposes the great abettors of this Spanish question, connected with the Opposition, give their support to a recognition of the Spanish provinces, in relation to the great mercantile advantages which this measure may afford to this country; or, from their love of democracy, in opposition to a monarchical aristocracy?

The King has no difficulty in answering this question, and

let the opportunity arise, the same line of conduct would be as promptly applied by these gentlemen to the emancipation of our own colonial possessions, or to any other of the remote settlements at present under the dominion of the British Crown.

The King cannot but be aware that this, as well as every other kingdom, must have its own latent sources of wealth and power peculiar to itself, the cultivation of which becomes essential to the maintenance of its individual prosperity; but the King desires to observe that the policy, or wisdom which is to balance the interest of kingdoms is not to be found in hasty decisions.

The King has too much reason to apprehend that the separation from our Allies, so justly and so honestly referred to by the Emperor of Austria, will very soon lead to consequences that will end in disturbing the tranquillity of Europe.

Why was the Quadruplé Alliance formed? To carry into execution, not only the maintenance of the treaties of peace connected with the settlement of Europe (just then concluded), but also for the purpose of controlling the ambition and jealousies of the great Allied Powers themselves in relation to each other.

The Jacobins of the world, now calling themselves the Liberals, saw the peace of Europe secured by this great measure, and have therefore never ceased to villify the principle of the Quadruple Alliance.

The late policy of Great Britain has loosened these beneficial ties, by demonstrating a restless desire of self-interest in direct opposition to those wise and comprehensive principles, by which the peace and general interests of Europe were bound together.

The King desires, therefore, distinctly to know from his Cabinet, individually (*seriatim*), whether the great principles of policy established by his Government in the years 1814, 1815, and 1818, *are, or are not, to be abandoned.*

The answer to this question will enable the King to satisfy himself of the steps necessary to be taken for the purpose of

preventing this country from being again involved in a ruinous, and disastrous war.

G. R.

CARLTON HOUSE, Jan. 27, 1825.

(*From the Cabinet.*)

Jan. 29, 1825.

Present.—All the Ministers except Lord Bexley (who was absent on account of the death of a relation).

Lord Liverpool has, in obedience to Your Majesty's commands, communicated to Y. M.'s confidential servants the paper which Y. M. has transmitted to him for that purpose.

Y. M. is graciously pleased to propose, at the conclusion of this paper, the following question to your confidential servants, and to desire them to submit their opinions to Y. M. individually, 'Whether the great principles of policy 'established by Y. M.'s Government in the years 1814, 1815, 'and 1818, *are,* or *are not, to be* abandoned?'

Upon communicating freely with each other their respective individual opinions, Y. M.'s servants have found so entire an agreement to subsist between them, as to the substance of the answer to be returned to Y. M.'s question, that they humbly request Y. M.'s permission to give that answer, generally and collectively.

Y. M.'s servants think it their duty to remind Y. M. that a divergence of opinion between Y. M. and your Allies, as to the nature of their engagements for the maintenance of the peace of Europe, began to appear even in the negotiations of 1815, and Y. M.'s plenipotentiary, upon that occasion, declared to Y. M.'s Allies the extent to which alone Y. M. would be a party to such engagements.

This divergence became still more apparent in the Conferences at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818; and after several intermediate explanations, the Allied Governments still persisting in their own interpretation of the principles of those treaties, and even in representing Y. M. as concurring in such interpretation, Y. M. found it necessary to proclaim to the world, by the circular note of the late Lord Londonderry

of the 19th January, 1821, Y. M.'s dissent from that interpretation.

Y. M.'s servants feel it to be their duty, therefore, to state, that they fully recognise the principles of policy laid down in 1814, 1815, and 1818, in the sense given to them repeatedly by Y. M.'s plenipotentiary, and specially in the circular so issued by Y. M.'s command in 1821, and in no other.

With respect to the future application of those principles, Y. M.'s servants are deeply impressed with the obligation of preserving Y. M.'s engagements in the sense in which they have been declared on the part of Y. M., and with the advantages which may result from maintaining the system of confidence and reciprocal communication established with Y. M.'s Allies at the periods to which Y. M. refers.

Y. M.'s servants having thus answered the questions which Y. M. has been pleased to propose to them, most humbly request Y. M.'s permission to advert to that part of Y. M.'s paper which respects the New States of Spanish America.

It was not their wish to conceal from Y. M. that there existed amongst them some difference of opinion as to the advice to be tendered to Y. M. upon this subject.

The decision of Y. M.'s Cabinet was not submitted to Y. M. till after as long and as continued a deliberation as ever has been given to any great question of national policy.

Y. M.'s servants deeply regretted that Y. M.'s feelings and sentiments appeared to be adverse to the opinion of a great majority of your Cabinet; and nothing but an overruling sense of duty could have induced them, under such circumstances, to press their decision upon Y. M.

Y. M. was graciously pleased to consent that this decision should be acted upon; and it was by Y. M.'s special directions that communication was made to all the Great Powers of Europe of the decision adopted by Y. M.'s Government.

Whatever difference, or shades of difference of opinion may have hitherto existed amongst Y. M.'s servants on the subject of Spanish America, they humbly submit now to Y. M. their unanimous opinion, that the measures in progress respecting Spanish America are in no way inconsistent with

any engagement between Y. M. and your Allies, that those measures are now irrevocable, and that the faith and honour of the country are pledged to all their necessary consequences.

Y. M.'s servants cannot conclude without assuring Y. M. that in the advice which they have humbly submitted to Y. M. upon this, and upon all former occasions, the object nearest all their hearts has been to uphold Y. M.'s honour and dignity, and to promote the interests and prosperity of your people.

(*From the King.*)

The King has received from Lord Liverpool the declaration of the Cabinet in reply to the King's paper.

The King has only to observe, that if an earnest desire of 'maintaining the system of confidence and reciprocal communication with the Allies' be fully and faithfully acted upon, it is all that the King can require.

The King readily admits Lord Liverpool's statement that the recognition *at this time* of the South American provinces was certainly in opposition to the King's own judgment; but the King hopes, as the step has been taken, that it will prove a measure full of the beneficial results which are anticipated, by adding to the prosperity of this country without interfering with the general peace and tranquillity of Europe.

CARLTON HOUSE, Jan. 30, 1825. G. R.

Mr. Canning, having thought it right, in consequence of the King's reply, to send a special rejoinder, before doing so he submitted it to Lord Liverpool.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Gloucester Lodge, Feb. 2, 1825.

I was going to send this letter to the King yesterday, when C. Ellis suggested that I ought first to show it to you.

I thought that I was doing more considerately by you in not showing it.

But as it is possible, that your opinion might agree with his, as I would not, for the world, appear to act unfairly or unkindly to you, I send it.

Forward the box to Mount Charles when you have done with it.

The omission of the qualifying paragraph in your draft of the Cabinet letter has done this mischief.

The pledge is now general, and impracticable.

The King has dexterously seized this advantage—declares himself satisfied with the pledge, and throws all the responsibility upon the mode of acting upon it.

Had the paper been read over again, I should have felt the whole force of the omission. But ill and tired to death with Westmorland's discussions, I would have yielded anything at the moment rather than endure them longer.

The consequence, however, is too serious to be passed by. The matter must be understood, or I shall hereafter be accused of breach of compact.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

(*Secret.*)

MY DEAR CANNING, Feb. 2, 1825.

I certainly do not see the *necessity* of this letter, but I see nothing whatever to object to the reasoning.

I wish only you could soften in the third page the paragraph respecting the *want of confidence and withdrawing the seals.* I think you are not called upon by anything in his answer to bring forward this idea, and it is always better omitted till last extremities. It gives a character to your paper which it would not otherwise have.

Ever yours, L.

(*To the King.*)

Gloucester Lodge, Feb. 1, 1825.

Mr. Canning most humbly requests Your Majesty's gracious permission humbly to state to Y. M.,

That, having concurred in the collective answer of the Cabinet to Y. M.'s letter of Thursday last, he should not have presumed to trespass upon Y. M. individually, if it had

not been that one passage in Y. M.'s gracious reply to your Cabinet appears to Mr. Canning to lay him under the necessity of a particular justification.

Y. M. is pleased to say that, 'If an earnest desire of 'maintaining the system of confidence and reciprocal com- 'munication with the Allies be fully and faithfully acted 'upon, it is all that Y. M. can desire.'

The duty of 'acting upon' this system having been for the last two years the peculiar duty of Mr. Canning, he trusts that Y. M. will pardon him for saying that *if* he has failed to execute that duty 'fully,' his error may have been one of judgment, or may have proceeded from defect of ability; but that if, in the execution of that or of any other duty to Y. M., he appears to Y. M. not to have acted 'faithfully,' according to the best of his ability and judgment, he humbly implores Y. M. not to hesitate in expressing that opinion, however painful to a servant from whom Y. M. must in such case have already withdrawn the confidence without which it is impossible that he should continue to serve Y. M. either with efficiency or with honour.

But whatever may be Y. M.'s Royal pleasure in that respect, Mr. Canning owes it to himself (after all that has passed)—and he humbly trusts that Y. M.'s justice will allow him—to retrace as shortly as he can to Y. M. the course of the communications which have taken place with the Allies, on the two main questions now chiefly occupying the attention of Europe, the Greek question, and that relating to Spanish America.

With respect to the Greek question, the communications of Y. M.'s Government to those of Russia and of Austria have been constant, open, and unreserved.

To Prussia Lord Clanwilliam has been enabled to state all that was material to be known to a Power professedly feeling a very partial and remote interest in the question. And Lord Granville has been for some time in possession of *all* the correspondence on the subject (including even the instructions to Mr. Stratford Canning) for the purpose of being communicated personally to M. Villèle whenever M. Villèle pleases to receive that communication.

The reciprocal confidence from Russia has been ample, and, it is to be hoped, sincere. From Vienna, notwithstanding Prince Metternich's voluminous despatches, it was only the day before yesterday that we learned the important fact that Prince Metternich intends to open the Conference at St. Petersburgh with a resolution 'That the Turkish Sovereignty over Greece shall be maintained;' a resolution never once hinted at while Prince Metternich was urging Y. M.'s Government to send a plenipotentiary to that Conference; and one which, brought forward in the presence of a plenipotentiary from Y. M., it would have been equally embarrassing to him, either to affirm or to deny.

From Prussia there has been no communication, except the reading by Baron Malzahn to Mr. Canning of a long declamatory despatch from M. Ancillon (of which no copy was given), the colour of which appeared to Mr. Canning to be highly favourable to the Greeks, but of which he would not venture, from memory, to pretend to furnish a correct abstract.

From France not one word.

If, therefore, from any quarter Y. M. has been led to apprehend that your Government has, on this question, been behindhand in confidence with the Great Powers of the Continent, Mr. Canning has no hesitation in averring, and it is his duty to Y. M. as well as just to himself to aver plainly, that Y. M. has, in this respect, been led to believe what is the reverse of truth.

With respect to Spanish America, the communications of Y. M.'s Government from October, 1823, to March, 1824, were limited only by the matter to be communicated. Absolutely nothing was withholden; except only the instructions to Y. M.'s agents in America: and even of those instructions the substance was stated without reserve.

Since that period there have been two instances of reservation towards the Allies: not through any exercise of Mr. Canning's individual discretion, but upon deliberate decision of the Cabinet; the first as to the offer to Spain, in the month of May, to guarantee to her the secure possession of

Cuba; the second, as to the resolution, taken in July, to negotiate a treaty with Buenos Ayres.

As to the first of these reservations, it is obvious that the *secret* belonged to Spain much more than to Y. M.'s Government. The divulging of it, especially while the offer was yet pending, might have been highly unpleasing, not to say prejudicial to Spain. It appears that the Spanish Cabinet has disclosed it to some of the Allies—to Russia—and it is now mere matter of history.

The reservation with respect to Buenos Ayres was decided by the Cabinet on a similar ground, that of the desirableness of preserving the resolution secret *for a time*.

Mr. Canning feels it to be absolutely incumbent upon him to bring this consideration fairly before Y. M., not so much on his own account, as on that of those who serve under him in his office.

The intention of the Cabinet respecting Buenos Ayres was necessarily known to those persons in July. From July to January (a period of near six months) not a whisper of that intention transpired.

The intention with respect to Mexico, &c., was communicated to the foreign Ministers on the 1st of January; and on the 3rd it was made known to the world, in all its detail, through the *Morning Chronicle*.

The publicity in this case was perhaps of no great importance: but cases might occur in which it would be in the highest degree inconvenient.

The Russian memoir on Greece, for instance, which was confidentially communicated to all the Allies, found its way into a newspaper at Paris. Let it be supposed that Y. M.'s Government had, upon the pressing and repeated solicitations of Count Lieven, circulated a corresponding paper of conjectural arrangements for the Turkish Empire, and the Greek provinces in insurrection against it. The publication of the Russian memoir was either accidental or mischievously designed. If accidental, a paper of Y. M.'s Government, alike distributed, would be liable to the like accident. If designed, the temptation to embroil Y. M.'s Government

with Turkey, or with Greece, or with both, would hardly be less strong than the like temptation with respect to Russia.

But the publication of the Russian memoir produced, probably, not the slightest inconvenience to the Emperor of Russia at St. Petersburgh; while that of a similar paper drawn up by Y. M.'s Government would have occasioned to them a whole session of premature, and embarrassing discussions.

Mr. Canning does not state these considerations as objections to the 'system of confidence and reciprocal communication;' but he states them to show, that, what may be reciprocal is not therefore necessarily *equal* between responsible and irresponsible Governments; and that the 'confidences' on the part of Y. M.'s Government *must* be qualified by a sound discretion; of which *it* only, and not any foreign Power must be the judge. And Mr. Canning ventures most humbly to lay these matters before Y. M. with the greater freedom, because he hopes that he has been able to show, at the same time, that 'the system,' a full and faithful execution of which is enjoined by Y. M. for the future, *has been* 'acted upon,' in time past, as '*fully*' as circumstances would allow; whether 'faithfully' it is not for Mr. Canning to presume to determine; but he is sure with an earnest and anxious wish to consult, in all things, the honour of Y. M.'s Crown, and to merit, if possible, Y. M.'s confidence and approbation.

Of the rejoinder from the King to Mr Canning, I have no copy; but I know that it was decidedly conciliatory, desiring that the matter might be dropped.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Wynn is right when he says this *demand*, on the part of the King, proceeded 'wholly from *foreign* influence;' but there can be no doubt, but that his Majesty expected from some of his servants more support than he received. The expectations, which he had been led to entertain, were greatly disappointed by an unanimous reply.

That Mr. Canning was ready to believe that this hostile step, which beyond all doubt was directed against him, did proceed 'wholly from *foreign* influence,' is evident from the following extracts from a letter to Lord Granville within two months after the preceding correspondence:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, March 11, 1825.

You ask me what you shall say to Metternich. [He was then expected in Paris.]

In the first place you shall hear what I think of him—that he is the greatest r—— and l—— on the Continent, perhaps in the civilized world.

In the second place, you shall learn that I have evidence, which I entirely believe, of his having been for the last twelvemonth at least, perhaps longer, at the bottom of an intrigue with the Court here—of which Madame de —— was the organ—to change the politics of this Government, by changing *me*.

Recently, very recently, he is convinced that this intrigue has totally failed, and that there is no chance of renewing it to advantage. Prince Esterhazy has arrived at this conviction some time ago, but he could not so easily impress it on his principal. . . . Metternich's instructions to Prince Esterhazy were, to keep himself safe—to let Madame de —— do all: to watch the impression made, but not to commit himself or his Government.

* * * * *

Now, with this knowledge, what do *you* say to the question of what you shall say to Metternich?

I am of opinion—upon politics, nothing, until he begins; and then as little as possible till you have reported to me what he has said. I have no sort of hope of any good being done with him by conciliation. But I should be glad that he should know that I *know* him, and am aware how much I am indebted to him for his good intentions: but that I am, nevertheless, disposed to be on good terms with him, and to act for the best with him on the points on which we agree.

Those points are, first *Brazil*, up to a certain possible division, which I will do all that I can to avoid.

The second is to gain time on the Greek question, though our ways of going about to gain time are very different.

If he talks of coming to England do not encourage him. But as Esterhazy is going to meet him at Paris, I trust that he has given up the notion of a visit to Windsor. He would have come to triumph; I would not advise him to come to intrigue.

The Prince did not come to England.

The communication which was made on the 1st of January to the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors and to the Prussian Minister, of the intention of the British Government to recognise the independence of Mexico, resulted in their communicating to Mr. Canning, severally, in the following March, the replies of their respective Governments.

A graphic description of these communications is contained in a letter to Lord Granville.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, March 4, 1825.

You will have seen that cold and fever did not save me from gout, and that gout did not prevent me from speaking upon the Catholic question.

I am sure that I judged right in the last point. The aggravation of illness which the exertion occasioned is gone off. Gout is gradually yielding, and I now look forward to the prospect of a tolerably quiet life till after Easter.

The month that has elapsed since the meeting of Parliament is altogether one of the most important that I remember. I am not dissatisfied with its results.

I am hard at work upon Stuart's instructions for Brazil. I hope to get him off, and Lamb too, in the course of next week.

The last three mornings have been occupied partly in receiving the three successive communications of Count Lieven, Prince Esterhazy, and Baron Maltzahn, of the high and mighty displeasure of their Courts with respect to Spanish America. Lieven led the way on Wednesday. He began to open a long despatch evidently with the intention of reading it to me. I stopped *in limine*, desiring to know if he was authorized to give a copy of it. He said no; upon which I declined hearing it, unless he could give me his word, that no copy would be sent to any other Court. He said he could not undertake to say that it would not be sent to other Russian missions, but that he had no notion that *a copy of it* would be given to the Courts at which they were severally accredited. I answered that I was determined *either* to have a copy of a despatch which might be quoted to foreign Courts (as former despatches had been), as having been communicated to me, and remaining unanswered, *or* to be able to say that no despatch had been communicated to me at all. It was utterly impossible for me, I said, to charge my memory with the expressions of a long despatch once read over to me, or to be able to judge on one such hearing whether it did or did not contain expressions which I ought not to pass over without remark. Yet by the process now proposed I was responsible to the King and to my colleagues, and ultimately perhaps to Parliament, for the contents of a paper which might be of the most essentially important character; and of which the text might be quoted hereafter by third parties, as bearing a meaning which I did not on the instant attribute to it, and yet which upon bare recollection I could not controvert. Lieven was confounded. He asked me what he was to do? I said, what he pleased, but I took the exception now before I heard a word of his despatch, because I would not have it thought that the contents of the despatch, whatever *they* might be, had anything to do with that exception. I must, however, own that I was led to make it now, the rather because I had learnt from St. Petersburgh that he, Count Lieven, had been instructed not to give me a copy of the despatch on Turkey and Greece, which instruction his

own good sense had led him to disobey; that in that instance it was absolutely preposterous to refuse a copy, that the despatch professed to be a narrative—of which dates and facts were the elements; and that to have *read* such a statement to me, and then circulated it throughout Europe as what had been *communicated* to me, and acquiesced in by my silence, would have been an unfairness such as it was as well to let him know, once for all, I was determined to resist.

Might he state to me *verbally* what he was ordered to state, without reference to his despatch? Undoubtedly, I was prepared to hear anything that he had to *say* to me. I must afterwards take my own way of verifying the exactness of my recollection.

He then proceeded to pronounce a discourse—no matter for the substance at present—after which he left me.

I instantly wrote down the substance of what I understood him to have said to me, and sent him my memorandum, with a letter requesting him to correct any inaccuracies. The result is, that I have a document in spite of all their contrivance.

Yesterday the same scene with Esterhazy, who had not seen Lieven in the interval, and therefore came unprepared.

He too made me a speech, and to him I immediately sent a memorandum of what I understood him to have said; I have not yet received his answer.

To-day Maltzahn came, evidently prepared; for he produced no paper, but set off *at score*. This rather provoked me (for he is the worst of all), but I was even with him. For whereas with the others I merely listened and put in no word of my own, I thought it a good opportunity to pay off my reserve upon Maltzahn; and accordingly said to him a few as disagreeable things as I could upon the principle of legitimacy as exemplified in the readiness of the Allies to have made peace with Buonaparte (in 1814), and failing Buonaparte to have put some other than Louis XVIII. upon the throne; and also in the general recognition of Bernadotte, while the lawful King of Sweden is wandering in exile and begging through Europe. I asked him how he reconciled

these things with the high principles which he was ordered to proclaim about the rights of Spain to her Spanish Americas? He had nothing to answer. I have sent *him* a memorandum too, in which my part of the dialogue is inserted.

Of course I have not yet his answer. He left me only two hours ago.

I think I shall teach the Holy Alliance not to try the trick of these simultaneous sermons again.

Ever yours,

G. C.

P.S.—I ought to say that of the three sermons, the Russian is the most moderate. The Austrian the most stiff and severe (or, austere, I should rather say, the highest in principle), the Prussian the most impertinent, supposing always that they have been correctly reported to me. But neither goes farther than 'regret and *improbation*,' and neither talks of consequences. Russia professedly wishes to hear no more of the matter.

This you may tell Villèle.

(*Private and Political.*)

Gloucester Lodge, April 8, 1825.

My dear Granville,

Prince Esterhazy called upon me on Monday at the Foreign Office, and delivered to me your long-dated letter.

As I was on the point of setting out for G. L., he entered very little into politics; but just found time to make the same remark which you quote, as having been made by Metternich on the memoranda.

I explained to Esterhazy, as you may do to M., that I made it a point to record the memoranda, just as I received them back from the respective parties.

Count Lieven sent me a long *addition*, which I added (translating it only in order to incorporate it with mine).

Maltzahn sent me an entire substitution, and I substituted it for mine.

Esterhazy sent me a partial correction, and I let it stand as he sent it. He certainly said what I set down for him; but he meant (he says) to apply what he said to Brazil.

It is very salutary for the King of Spain to know that Austria is not so determined as H.C.M. thought to hold out with him for ever.

As for the communication of these memoranda, they are to be communicated nowhere, without encountering a previous communication on the part of the Allied Courts.

Does Prince Metternich suppose it possible that we can allow the Allies to say to every Court in Europe—'See what a snubbing we gave to the British Government,' without taking care to reduce that snubbing to its just value?

It is quite a mistake, or rather a confusion, to talk of this mode of rectification as a breach of confidence. Information may be given without offence, and to repeat it without permission is a breach of confidence. But a scolding is not a confidence, and if the party giving it thinks himself entitled to publish the fact of its having been given, surely the party receiving it makes but moderate and just reprisals when he tells the world exactly to what it amounted.

This does not suit Metternich's system, and why? because simultaneous scolding is a part of the assumed jurisdiction of the Holy Alliance.

But it is surely a very innocent revenge to repeat exactly what has been said, and to show them how little we mind it: better so, than scold again.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

In the interval between the dates of these two last letters, Prince Metternich was staying at Paris. Mr. Canning evidently did not feel at all satisfied with his conduct there.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, April 4, 1825.

I was glad to find, by your private letter of yesterday, that the observation which I had hazarded in mine of Friday, respecting your part in the conference with Metternich, had occurred also to your own mind.

I suspect from what you have written, that the temper which Metternich showed, under all his smoothness, and your natural and just indisposition to run the risk of losing yours in a controversy with him, had something to do with your utterance—if so, I cannot blame you; but if it be true (as you now apprehend) that he has not given up his projects, I confess I think it very essential that your contradiction of his assumptions should be recorded in your public correspondence, and I hope your interview with him, upon the note to Los Rios, will have afforded you an opportunity for supplying whatever you may have thought wanting in your share of the former dialogue.

I very much wish too, in the same supposition (that of his being about to recommence his intrigues), that he should know how well I am apprised of all the *good* which he intended to me. I should like him to understand, that a renewal of similar attempts may lead to some such public manifestation of my knowledge of what has passed, as may let the House of Commons and the public into the secret. I wonder whether he is aware that the private communication of foreign Ministers with the King of England is wholly at variance with the spirit, and practice too, of the British Constitution. That, during his reign of half a century, George III. (whom all parties now agree in taking as the model of an English King) never indulged himself in such communications, and that the custom introduced in the time of my predecessor survives only by sufferance, and would not stand the test of parliamentary discussion.

I should be very sorry to do anything at all unpleasant to the King, but it is my duty to be present at every interview between his Majesty and a foreign Minister. Nothing

would induce me to go to that extent; but short of *that*, being in the right, I would justly resent, and pretty effectually repress, such manœuvres as Metternich has been encouraging.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

But a change was coming over the scene, which resulted in a great diminution of anxiety to Mr. Canning, and the establishment of cordial and friendly relations between him and his royal master.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VISIT OF SIR WILLIAM KNIGHTON TO MR. CANNING — ESTABLISHMENT OF CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KING AND MR. CANNING—RECEPTION OF SPANISH AMERICAN ENVOYS BY HIS MAJESTY.

THE consequences which resulted from the displeasure of the members of the Holy Alliance at the step taken by Great Britain in recognising the Spanish colonies as independent States, were so insignificant, in comparison with what had been confidently predicted by the opponents of that measure, that the King, after a short time, began to view its policy in a very different light from that in which he viewed it when he wrote his letter to the Cabinet, inserted in the last chapter.

No doubt, too, he felt not a little aggrieved that, instead of an 'individual (*seriatim*) answer' from each of his confidential servants, which he required from them in reply to his question, he only obtained a rejoinder, in which their opinions were clubbed together with stern unanimity, so that he found no opening for making a breach in their ranks. His only option was that of dismissing all, or none.

These circumstances naturally started in his Majesty's mind the question, whether, as he could not get rid of that one of his Ministers who was most obnoxious to him, it would not be far better for the

country, as well as for his own tranquillity of mind, for him to give his full confidence to his servant, instead of going on with him in a state of ill-disguised estrangement. In answering this question his Majesty called to his counsel his confidential and intimate friend and adviser, the late Sir William Knighton, who at that time held the post of Privy Purse.

On the 27th of April,* Mr Canning not having been well, had passed the day in bed, at Gloucester Lodge. About four o'clock in the afternoon, whilst dictating to me a despatch, a carriage drove up to the door, orders having been given that no one was to be admitted. The visitor was not, however, to be repulsed by a common denial. The servant was desired to inquire, 'whether Mr. Canning would 'not see, for a very few minutes, Sir William Knigh-'ton, who was the bearer of a message from the 'King?' Mr. Canning, who well knew that Sir William had been actively mixed up in the late proceedings, looked at me with amazement, when I reported to him the message from Sir William. He, however, at once decided to admit the messenger from his Sovereign, who was accordingly ushered into his bedroom. Great as was the curiosity of the private Secretary, he, of course, quitted the room as Sir William entered. The 'very few minutes' asked for were soon gone, yet the visitor remained—half an hour, one hour, two hours passed away, and the conference continued. At length, when three hours had nearly elapsed, Sir William left, and I rejoined Mr. Canning.

'Well,' he said, with a countenance beaming with pleasure, 'we have had a most curious and satisfactory 'conversation. Take a sheet of paper, and I will 'dictate to you what passed.' The paper so dictated is now before me. There are parts of it which, even at this distance of time, appear to me better not published; but the following extracts show the tone and nature of the conversation:—

(*Most Secret Memorandum.*)

Gloucester Lodge, April 27, 1825.

Sir William Knighton called upon me to-day by the command, as he said, of his Majesty, to inquire after the state of my health. After a good deal of talk on this subject, he adverted to a letter, which had reference to the promotion of a young man of the name of Annesley (heir to the earldom of that name) to the consulship at Antwerp.

* * * *

After disposing of these matters, which were the apparent causes of Sir W. Knighton's visit, he (Sir W. K.) proceeded to say that, after I should be well rid of this fit of the gout, I must adopt regimen, not only of food, air, and exercise, but of relaxation; for that the mind had as much to say as the state of the body, in that particular complaint above all others; and that, as he hoped, Parliament would not give me much more trouble this year, so he flattered himself also that in other respects I should have less occasion of agitation and anxiety than heretofore; that he was quite aware that the last year must have been to me most trying, and the pulse of the mind (as he expressed himself) must have been going at the rate of sixteen miles an hour.

I admitted that there was some truth in this observation, and said that I dated the origin of my present fit of the gout at least as far back as December. But that in truth from the rising of Parliament last year up to December (which was the crisis) had been a period of constant labour and anxiety. I did not particularize this statement further; but

he at once showed that he understood me, and had, in fact, himself been alluding to the same thing, by saying, that I must be aware that the King had sent him to the Continent three or four times during the last six months; that whenever he had gone he had, of course, had his eyes and ears about him, and had been anxious to collect general feelings and opinions—that he was quite satisfied that the Spanish American question was everywhere working in the sense which I could desire; that foreign nations were astounded at the step, and some of them very angry, but that not one of them ventured to imagine that it was possible to interpose any resistance to England. That Metternich had been trying what he could do, and covering his intrigues with the most plausible topics, but that his motive at the bottom was soreness at my success, and envy of my reputation, from which motive he would have done anything to get rid of me. But that he (Metternich) was now convinced that I was too strong for him, and would, he (Sir W. K.) had no doubt, henceforth try to accommodate himself to circumstances as well as he could.

Sir W. K. said that he failed not to mention his own impressions to the King, and that he had never in his life seen the King so tranquil and comfortable, as he appeared at the present moment. I said that it was my object to make his Majesty comfortable and happy, by placing him at the head of Europe, instead of being reckoned fifth in a great confederacy. That the circumstances which gave rise to that confederacy, and justified and held it together were gone by; and that the King of England could not have hung upon it longer without losing all importance, even in the eyes of the other members of it, and without incurring the odium of all other nations; nay, that his share of odium would be greater than that of the four continental Sovereigns; because they, being more or less arbitrary, might be considered as labouring in their vocation, but that the continuance of England as a subordinate part of such a league, would have been considered as depriving them of their natural protection, and would be resented accordingly.

I said that I was aware that the King had been afraid that the steps taken with respect to Spanish America would involve us in a war; that I was perfectly confident that they would not if taken in time, but that every delay in taking them might have had the very effect that it would have been intended to avoid, because it would have encouraged a presumption on the part of the Allies, that we were afraid, and would have led them to hazard saucy declarations, against which we should have been obliged by the people of this country to act, whether we would or no.

Sir W. K. said that the King had certainly entertained that fear, but was now perfectly satisfied that his fears had been unfounded; that he (Sir W. K.) was certain that, on the contrary, the fear of England was a predominant feeling with the continental Governments. I said that I hoped so; that that was the state to which I had wished to bring things, and that I trusted his Majesty must feel better pleased, upon reflection, to be the object of such fear, than of cajolery and contempt. Sir W. K. said that he felt sure that his Majesty was coming to that mind; that he had certainly been very loth to give up all his continental gossipings (or some expression to that effect) to which he had been accustomed too much and too long; that it was a great misfortune that the royalties and their suites had ever come to this country, but that he did hope that the effects of all that system were gradually passing away; and that Esterhazy's departure and Madame L——'s would be a break-up of the system of living with those two embassies, which he (Sir W. K.) had long lamented. I asked him, then, if he were aware that the gossipings of the Cottage were regularly transmitted to Metternich by Madame L——. He said he had no doubt of it, but that he very much doubted whether in their Cottage parties the King ever talked serious politics at any of them, though, of course, they had an opportunity of instilling any opinions which they wished; but the King certainly liked their society better than any others, and was somewhat at a loss to make up a society for himself.

* * * *

Sir W. K. went on to say, that upon all points, and upon everything connected with the King, he wished (if I would allow him) to speak to me at all times with the most perfect confidence and unreservedness; that he did not know that he could do any good, but that he was sure that it was his wish to do so, and that he had long desired an opportunity of explaining himself thus openly to me; that he could not help at the same time saying something of his own situation with the King, which was a very extraordinary, and might become a very embarrassing one. That, officially, he was nothing but Keeper of the Privy Purse, the concerns of which, he flattered himself, he had now brought into order; so that the King was now free from debt, and in a state of ease as to his finances, that he had never been before; but that as Keeper of the King's Privy Purse he had nothing to do with politics, yet politics of every sort were every day forced upon him; applications, petitions, representations of all sorts, which he got rid of as well as he could, but which made his life a very weary one. He had access to everything that was most secret, and was employed, not by his own good-will, but necessarily for the King's convenience, on matters of the most delicate nature, for which he had no sort of responsibility; that for his own part he could well be contented to be allowed to live with his family, and come up occasionally to pass his accounts with the King. He could just as well administer the King's private revenue, living at a distance from his Majesty, as Abercrombie could the revenues of the Duke of Devonshire in England. But that he knew the putting this plan in execution would expose his Majesty to great inconvenience; that his Majesty was used to him and to his help; and such was the growing disposition to indolence in his Majesty, that if he were away, business would get on very ill .... that it was a most painful part of his (Sir W. K.'s) duty to press business upon his Majesty, when it was absolutely necessary to be done .... and that his doing so sometimes produced unpleasant scenes. .... 'I believe [said Sir W. K.] he 'has as great an esteem and affection for me as anybody

'living; but he is uncertain, the creature of impulse . . . .
'when he has got a particular notion into his head, there is
'no eradicating it; and I have known him talk himself, when
'agitated and perfectly fasting, into as complete a state of
'intoxication, as if he had been dining and drinking largely.
'You see, therefore, that it is natural that I should wish for
'some arrangement; as to money it is no object to me; I
'made my fortune by my profession before I quitted it for the
'King's service.'

* * * *

'I keep myself as much as possible to myself in my pre-
'sent situation. I make it a rule never to dine abroad. I
'constantly refuse Lieven's and Esterhazy's; and even the
'other day, when you dined at the Duke of Wellington's with
'the King, I declined his gracious invitation, and therefore do
'not push myself forward; but my situation is not the less
'embarrassing, knowing everything, and known to know every-
'thing, and assailed on all sides, not allowed to be the private
'servant of the King, and yet not having any connexion with
'his Government.'

* * * *

I asked, Have you any desire to be in Parliament? 'Oh no,' he said; in truth, it seemed very difficult to him to say what would answer his purpose; that all his object had been to open himself fully to me, and to explain all his feelings, and all the difficulties of his present situation, that I might think it over at my leisure, or think no more about it, as I pleased; but that as long as I held my office, which he hoped would be very many years, and he remained about the King, I might rely upon his entire devotion, and employ him in any way which I thought useful in making things go on easily and satisfactorily. He thought the King very well, and quite as likely to live as the Duke of York. The mention of the Duke of York's name led to that of the Catholic question. He said the King knew nothing of the Duke of York's intention to make that speech, and certainly did not approve of it; that his Majesty had been so much out of humour with the Duke of York, about a house that he was going to

build, so much so, that they nearly came to disagreeable words about it, and that he (Sir W. K.) had been employed to compose the difference; that the King always likes the Duke of York to go to the play with him, and was in an excessive fidget and anger when the Duke did not come to dine; and that his ill-humour would certainly not be cured by hearing what kept him away. I asked him if the King, though not disposed to express it, had the same feeling as the Duke of York about the Coronation Oath. He said, not the same, or to the same degree, but certainly a strong feeling about it; so much so, that he had, before he became King, consulted the late Lord Londonderry as to the expediency of altering it before he was called upon to take it. I asked if there was any record of that consultation, and if he knew what had been done upon it. He said he did not know, nor did he believe that there was anything in writing; but that he was quite sure that the King had told him the fact, and that he would endeavour to refresh his memory as to the particulars. The difficulty which you will have with the King will be to satisfy him that the decision of Parliament and the advice of his Government ought to overbear his scruples. I said, of that there can be no doubt, as the King of England can do nothing, except by the advice of responsible advisers. He may indeed change his advisers as often as he pleases, till he gets those who will advise what he likes, if he can; but, on this occasion, I doubt whether, changing ever so often, he will be able to make a completely anti-Catholic Government which would long stand. 'Oh, no! '[said Sir W. K.] it would be quite impossible; he has no 'notion of that, I am sure; but I think he would like to dis-'solve the Parliament, and take the sense of a second House 'of Commons.' On which I said, I thought I saw in that nothing unreasonable. 'My expectation [said Sir W. K.] is, 'that when the thing comes a little nearer and more pressing, 'his Majesty will wish to talk to you upon the subject.' 'It is 'one [said I] upon which divided as the Government is, I should 'not think myself at liberty to originate any advice or opinion 'to his Majesty; but of course, as upon everything else, I

'should be ready to speak my opinion if he wishes to talk to 'me.' Lord Liverpool, he said, of course, if he does not make up his mind to support the question, will go out, if it should become necessary to carry it; though the state of the Government upon the question is now such as you allude to, it is evident that the settlement of it must be made by a Government. I said I saw no necessity for Lord Liverpool to go out, and I trusted that he had no thought of it. He said, 'You may depend upon it he would, and that he has made up 'his mind to do so; and then,' he added, 'I never saw Lord 'Liverpool in such an amiable humour, and so says the King, 'who was quite delighted with him at the levée on Wednesday, 'and said that he was all *suaviter in modo.*' He (Sir W. K.) then went on. Peel, too, would go out on account of Oxford. I said, God forbid! for he was certainly the most efficient Secretary of State for the Home Department that this country ever saw, and the most able and honest Minister. Indeed, I added, the King ought to be aware that he owes the unexampled comfort and tranquillity which he at present enjoys, —and which (said Sir W. K., interrupting) he admits never to have enjoyed before.—Well, I said, he owes it not to Lord Liverpool and me only, in our respective situations, but to the extraordinary efficiency with which those other great departments of the State are filled by Peel, Robinson, and Huskisson; those offices were never so filled all together before. Sir W. K. agreed to this, and went off in a great panegyric about Huskisson, but, to my surprise, said nothing about Robinson, whom I believed to be one of the greatest favourites of the King, and particularly of Knighton. He then reverted to Peel, and gave reasons why he thought he would go out. His health, his wealth, his desire of leisure, and particularly of travelling; but without any particular praise of Peel, whom I had also imagined to be one of Sir W. K.'s first favourites.

He talked of the Duke of Wellington as the person in whom the King had great confidence, though he thought he saw him much less than heretofore, when the continental system was in more vogue. He thought the Duke essen-

tially ill, but hoped that he was now taking care of himself. Several other matters of less consequence arose in the course of the conversation, of which I entertain no very distinct recollection. The cause of the visit probably was as stated, the King's command to inquire after my gout . . . . but the main object which he (Sir W. K.) evidently had at heart was, first, to set himself right with me as to the intrigues of last summer, of which he knows that I suspect him, and perhaps suspects that I knew him to be, if not an active instrument, a very interested spectator, and to bring his situation before me with a view to some object, and in the contemplation of some contingency, which I do not pretend to divine.

From the date of this interview began a new era in Mr. Canning's official life. It is the fashion to calumniate the memory of George IV., to represent him as destitute of every amiable quality, and to impute selfishness and dissimulation as marked features in his character; but, so far as regards his dealings with Mr. Canning, it must be confessed that he sacrificed his own personal feelings, when he consented to re-admit him into his councils, and that his unfriendly feelings ceased, so soon as he became persuaded that Mr. Canning's policy was really advantageous to the nation which he ruled. His Majesty was for a time deceived as to its probable results, by parties whom he had admitted to his friendship; but when facts proved the erroneousness of their representations, he readily made the first advances towards a better understanding. From the day when the King first sent to his Minister his confidential friend, on this mission of conciliation, to the day of that Minister's too speedy death, nothing could surpass the good faith and kindness which the King manifested

in the whole of his conduct towards him. Mr. Canning, indeed, had gained not only the good-will and confidence, but the affectionate attachment of his royal master; and when the fatal moment came, which for ever severed the friendly relations which had grown up between them, the Monarch grieved as for the loss of a brother, and wept over the bier of one whose loyalty and value he had only too recently learned to prize as they deserved.

The change in Mr. Canning's position with the King is manifest by his letters to Lord Granville:—

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Oct. 11, 1825.

I received your mail of Monday, with your three private letters, at the moment of setting out on my return to Seaford.

I came up for three or four days to give audiences to foreign Ministers, and to keep the course of the office clear by rubbing off small arrears.

We hope for fine weather for the remainder of the month at Seaford. Frere* is established there with Charles (Ellis).

You will not think my journey to town fruitless, when I tell you that I received, the day before yesterday, from the King a note in which is the following sentence:—

'The King will receive the Ministers of the *New States* early in November.'

Recollecting that this time twelvemonth it was a question whether there should be any *New States* at all, and that in the discussions of that day, one of the main arguments employed to deter me from my purpose was, that the King would never be brought to receive their Ministers, I think the two lines above quoted as satisfactory a proof of the sum as could be desired.

I am afraid, however, that the King offers me more than I shall be able to take. For I have only one Minister, that

---

* The Right Hon. J. Hookham Frere.

of Columbia, here, but I expect a Buenos Ayrean by the next packet.

Immediately after the presentation I shall appoint Ministers (with the double character) to both States; and to this also I have obtained his Majesty's complete acquiescence.

I have a peculiar pleasure in doing this, to show Mexico what she has lost by her selfish and silly policy in overreaching Morier and Ward, in the negotiation of the treaty, and afterwards boasting, as her Minister, M. Alaman, was foolish enough to do, that he *had* overreached the British plenipotentiaries, and had made better terms for Mexico than Columbia had been able to obtain.

I delighted in raising these people into States, but I shall not let them fancy themselves too fine fellows, as they would be apt to do if not snubbed when they deserve it.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

Again, in another letter, dated Oct. 31, 1825, Mr. Canning says—

As for Greece, I have now applications from all the three Powers to take that question into our hands. The King, I hope (indeed I have reason to believe), begins to feel that I have *not*, as he was taught to apprehend, 'lost to him his 'status among the Powers of the Continent,' but only 'changed it from the tail of Europe to the head.'

What is to be done is a different thing; but nothing just yet. Things are not yet ripe for our interference; for *we* must not (like our good Allies) interfere in vain. If we act, we must finish what is to be done.

The next letter contains an account of his Majesty's reception of the Columbian Minister.

(*Most Private.*)

Foreign Office, Nov. 21, 1825, Six P.M.

My dear Granville,

Having a few minutes between my return from the Council, and the going out of the Paris mail, I cannot resist

the temptation of telling you, that the King's reception of Signor Hurtado, the Columbian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, has been all I that could desire.

I had mentioned to his Majesty before Signor Hurtado came into the closet, that he had conducted himself eminently well during his residence of some years in England—had mixed himself in no factious cabal, nor, so far as I know and believe, in any dirty speculations.

Immediately upon his coming in, the King, without waiting for his address, began with a sentence to this effect, extraordinarily well worded, and pronounced.

'I have learnt with great satisfaction, Sir, that during 'your residence in this country, you have conducted your-'self with particular prudence and propriety, under very 'difficult circumstances. It is an earnest of the manner in 'which you will discharge the duties of the situation to 'which you are now appointed, and in which I have great 'pleasure in receiving you.'

Hurtado then made his speech, which was a very judicious and proper one; though rather of the longest, and in the most unlicensed and arbitrary French, which it is possible to imagine. (The King's speech to him was in English, which he understands, but does not venture to speak.)

I then told the King (in the presence of Hurtado), that 'I had received from Hurtado the most positive assurances 'of the disposition and desire of his Government to culti-'vate the relations of peace with all the world, but especially 'with the New States of America, and especially, among '*them*, with the State more immediately under his Majesty's 'protection, Brazil.'

To which Hurtado bowed, and muttered his assent; and his Majesty added—'I rejoice to hear it;' and turning to Hurtado, 'Peace, peace, by all means, and above all things. 'We have had thirty years of convulsions—let us all now 'conspire to keep the peace.'

And so the audience ended. And so, behold! the New World established, and, if we do not throw it away, ours!

Adieu. Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

(*To the King.*)

Eartham, Dec. 6, 1825.

Mr. Canning presents his humble duty to your Majesty. To spare your Majesty the trouble of going through the voluminous arrivals from Columbia, Mr. Canning has taken the liberty to select the most important and interesting of the despatches from Colonel Campbell, your Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Bogota, which contains a remarkable and most satisfactory confirmation of M. Hurtado's assurances respecting the pacific disposition of his Government.

The particular object of the reference to your Majesty is disposed of, by the Emperor of Brazil having already withdrawn his troops from the invaded provinces; but when it is considered, that, in this invasion, the Brazilians were clearly in the wrong, and that the Columbian Government had therefore, if it pleased, a just ground of quarrel, Mr. Canning cannot help flattering himself that this reference to your Majesty, on a point on which General Bolivar had both the right and the power to make reprisals against Brazil, may be taken as a pledge of a sincere desire to keep the peace in America, as well as an assurance that your Majesty's wishes and authority will have their due weight in the counsels of the New States of that Continent.

A proof of the altered relations between the King and Mr. Canning, is contained in a memorandum giving an account of what passed at Prince Esterhazy's audience of leave.

(*Secret.*)

Dec. 21, 1825.

On Tuesday, December 20, 1825, I attended Prince Esterhazy at his audience of leave of the King, previous to his departure for his embassy at Paris.

After many gracious expressions, on his Majesty's part, of the regret which he felt at losing Prince Esterhazy, and suitable returns on the part of the Prince, his Majesty said (in French) that it was particularly mortifying that Prince Esterhazy should leave England at such a time, when all was

going on so well; when his Majesty's Government was so much to his own mind, and when he should think every other Power was so completely satisfied with it.

Prince Esterhazy interposed a few words in confirmation of the King's sentiments, and expressive of his own satisfaction at the manner in which he was treated, especially by me. 'Que les formes avaient été toujours les plus amicales et qu'à present il était convaincu——' and was evidently proceeding to some reference to former political differences of opinion between himself and me, when the King interrupted him, and said—

'Oui, oui—il faut être juste;' and then turning to me, went on (still in French) to say—'Yes, it is right that you 'should know, and I am determined to tell you in his pre-'sence, that Esterhazy was the first 'de revenir sur votre 'compte,' and to disavow and to complain of the unreasonable ''preventions' of Prince Metternich. It is many months 'ago since Prince Esterhazy said to me, of his own accord, 'that he was ashamed for himself, and for his Court, of the 'injustice which had been done to you; and to express his 'conviction that, even on the points on which you had most 'differed, you had been right, and had done what was best 'for all.'

'Oui—je vous le jure,' said Prince Esterhazy, holding out his hands and taking mine, and the tears coming into his eyes; and then turning to the King, he said,—'Sire, de 'toutes les graces dont votre Majesté m'a comblées' (or words to that effect), 'I consider this as the most kind. 'I wished Mr. Canning to know this, but I could not myself 'tell it him, or be sure that he would have given me credit 'for it if I had. How little could I expect your Majesty 'would have deigned to take the task upon yourself. Oui, 'je vous jure,' he repeated, turning to me, 'que même dans 'la question coloniale, upon which it was my duty and that 'of others, according to our instructions, to oppose you all 'that we could, I have long been satisfied that you were 'entirely right; but still more upon the question which now 'occupies all our minds—I mean the Greek question.

'I do confess, Sire,' (he said to the King) 'I was, as we 'all were, excessively dissatisfied with Mr. Canning for his 'constant refusal to join in the conferences at St. Peters- 'burgh, and did really and truly think that he was sacri- 'ficing the general good to his particular opinions; but I 'now assure your Majesty, upon my honour, that I am quite 'convinced that he judged the matter rightly from the be- 'ginning, and that he took the only course which, as a 'British Minister, it was for the honour and interests of his 'country to take. Moimême dans sa situation et avec ses 'moyens, I hope I should have acted like him. Indeed, 'Sire, events have proved how just a view he took of this 'subject. He foresaw the nullity of our conferences, and 'knew that he could not commit England in them without 'exposing her to discredit, and impairing her utility in 'future.'

The King said a few words implying assent, and I interposed, saying—'Yes, Sire, in this country we cannot afford 'unprofitable discussions, or to take any public step, of 'which one knows beforehand that it will lead to no good.'

'Yes,' said the King. 'When we see our way, and 'can employ our own influence, we can do anything. Qui 'est ce?' (turning to Prince Esterhazy), 'qui pourroit avoir 'fait ce que nous venons d'accomplir au Brézil?' Prince Esterhazy expressed his entire assent, and went into a panegyric of the instructions given to Sir Charles Stuart.

'Au moins,' I said, 'Sire, nous avons sauvé là une 'Monarchie—which, as part of a confederacy, I would not 'answer for having been able to do.'

The conversation then turned upon the Emperor of Russia's death; upon the danger of a Turkish war. The King expressing his determination to exert all his influence to preserve peace, and Prince Esterhazy expressing for himself and for his Court the perfect and entire confidence which (pointing to me) they reposed in his Majesty's Government.

After Prince Esterhazy had taken leave, the King made me sit down, and repeated to me the conversation to which he had alluded in presence of Prince Esterhazy; and

which, his Majesty said, had begun by a voluntary declaration on Prince Esterhazy's part of the error in which he had been for some time respecting the course of my policy, and of his complete abjuration of that error.

The King said that Prince Metternich, though a very clever, was a very prejudiced man—that he had been used to have very much his own way. That poor Lord Londonderry had often found, that however well Prince Metternich might have appeared to understand a subject relating to England in conversation, yet, that three months after he got back to Vienna, he appeared to have forgotten totally all that had passed, and said and did such things as put Lord Londonderry to great embarrassment. That his (the King's) wish had been to bring me and Metternich together. That he had proposed to him (Metternich) to come over from Paris for that purpose. That he would have introduced us to each other, and shut us up in a room together—when in the course of an hour, he was sure, I should have convinced Metternich, and brought him to reason.

Referring to his Majesty's expressions of regret at the loss of Prince Esterhazy, I offered to write privately to Sir H. Wellesley, to sound Metternich, whether the arrangement for his removal could be reconsidered; which the King commanded me to do.

I asked whether his Majesty's sentiments with respect to Count Lieven were the same, and the King answered, '*Certainly;*' that his Majesty wished I would do anything in my power to preserve Count Lieven in his present situation, for that with Lieven and Esterhazy, I could manage everything.

On leaving his Majesty, I found Prince Esterhazy waiting for me in the outer room. He came up to me, and repeated with emotion the substance of what he had said before the King—thanked me for my intention to write to Sir H. Wellesley, but expressed his belief that it would be of no avail—regretted his departure at a moment when it was so essential that Austria and England should understand each other,—but conjured me to believe 'qu'il me rendit enfin

pleine justice'—and that he now comprehended and 'sçavoit apprécier ma politique,' that I had everything in my hands, and was 'destiné à jouer le plus grand rôle en Europe.'

It is needless to add that we parted very good friends.

The recognition of the independence of the Spanish American colonies was one of the most important events which took place while Mr. Canning held the seals of the Foreign Office. It had as great an influence over European politics as it had over the destiny of the colonies themselves. That destiny has proved with some of them far more disastrous than it ever entered, at that time, into any one's imagination to contemplate as possible. In those days they were all flourishing States, carrying on a very extensive trade with this country; and, considering that they were just emerging from the contest, whereby they established their independence, were in a very fair condition of order and civilization. It was, indeed, deemed by the British Government necessary preliminary to their recognition, that they should have established Governments, which were capable of preserving internal order, and discharging external national obligations.

Mr. Canning, however, was keenly alive to the essential importance to their future welfare, that England should throw over them the shield of her protection, and afford them the benefit of her cordial countenance, and her honest advice.

'Behold!' he exclaims, 'the New World established, and, *if we do not throw it away*, ours!'

The step which England had taken in their favour gave her an influence over them, which was capable of being turned to good account.

The anxiety of Bolivar (the greatest man whom the colonies have produced) to make Great Britain umpire between him and Brazil, when Brazil 'was clearly in the wrong,' affords of this abundant evidence. Had any of the colonies consented to receive as their head 'a crowned Bourbon,' a suggestion to which Mr. Canning was favourable, there is no reason why Mexico or Columbia or Peru might not, at this day, have been as prosperous as Brazil. A King, of a royal stock, has a power to make others bow to him, which usurpers, however able and powerful, can rarely permanently command.

To the New World Mr. Canning's loss was irreparable. It was 'established;' it was, and would continue 'ours, IF WE DID NOT THROW IT AWAY!'

CHAPTER XXVII.

AFFAIRS OF THE EAST—TURKEY AND RUSSIA—GREEK INSURRECTION.

WHEN Mr. Canning accepted the seals of the Foreign Office in 1822, the Greeks were maintaining a doubtful conflict with the Sultan, who was involved, at the same time, in disputes with Russia, which threatened to terminate in war. At this time there were two parties in the Russian Cabinet—one was strenuously engaged in endeavouring to bring about a war with Turkey, the other was desirous of preserving peace—the former was the most popular, the latter was the most powerful; for the Emperor himself belonged to it. It was the war party, which, without the knowledge of his Imperial Majesty, had fomented the Greek insurrection, in order to render the opportunity more favourable for an attack on Turkey, which they hoped would grow out of the disputes which they had contrived to create simultaneously between the two countries, on matters unconnected with the insurrection. The plan was artfully laid: for the classical recollections which attached to the Grecian soil, and the inhabitants being Christians striving to cast off the yoke of infidels, threw a romance into the cause of the rebels, and enlisted public sympathy throughout Europe in their favour.

Such was the then state of public opinion in this country, that it would have been impossible for any Government to have gone to war in defence of Turkey against Russian encroachment, solely on account of the incidental effect it would have in injuring the cause of the Greeks.

It was the Duke of Wellington's opinion, expressed in a private letter, that, 'unless we interposed with a 'fleet in the Black Sea, a Russian army could march 'without any serious obstacle to Constantinople;' 'although 'she might not accomplish her task 'without a tremendous sacrifice.'

In this state of affairs Mr. Canning's first object was to compose the differences between Russia and Turkey, so as to deprive the former of all pretext for war; the next, to bring about some arrangement between the Porte and her rebellious subjects, which, while it should diminish as little as possible the strength and resources of the Ottoman Empire, should, nevertheless, secure the Greeks against the oppressions of which they complained.

It was with this view that Lord Strangford was instructed to do his utmost at Constantinople to induce the Divan to yield to the requisitions of Russia, to prevent Russia from enforcing them by arms. The requisitions were not only reasonable in themselves, but the one relating to the navigation of the Black Sea (the regulations respecting which the Porte had, as far as regarded Russia, unwisely and unfairly altered) was of a nature to affect materially for the worse the whole of the southern provinces of the Russian Empire, which depend for their commercial prosperity on the navigation of that inland sea.

Just when Lord Strangford had brought his negotiations to a termination, a plan of pacification was drawn up by the Russian Government, at the same time that it was accompanied by a proposal to the Allies to hold conferences on the affairs of the East.

The succeeding letter gives a graphic account of the then position of the Greek question:—

My dear Granville, Ickworth, Nov. 15, 1824.

With regard to the proposed conferences upon Greece, upon which you wish to know what you are to say, you will not find a single line in the correspondence at Paris. We have never yet communicated with France upon it; and I did not put into Stuart's hands for his own information materials of which there was no immediate occasion to make use.

We have not communicated with France—nor France with us. And there is no reason (that I know) why confidences should not sometimes begin on one side, as well as on the other. We began upon South America. France might have begun upon Greece: the rather as we know that she was busy there. There, too, I have traced Chateaubriand's agents, perplexing the unhappy Greeks with I know not what absurd fancies of elective monarchies, and crusades against the infidels, with new knighthoods of Malta at *3s. 6d.* a head.

We, on the other hand, have had no intercourse with the Greeks—none except such as became unavoidable in the conflicting character of neutral and belligerent—(and that not going beyond the necessity of the case). We have therefore nothing to tell France, beyond what France has known as well, and as soon as we—that Russia proposed a conference at St. Petersburgh to consider of a plan of pacification for Greece—that she communicated this plan simultaneously to the four Great Powers her allies, requesting their observations—that one of those great Powers, I know not which,

unless it were Russia herself, contrived that this plan should find its way into a Paris newspaper, which newspaper found its way to Constantinople just in time, it was hoped, by *somebody* (but who that was time must show) to frustrate Lord Strangford's negotiation; that Lord Strangford nevertheless succeeded in bringing that negotiation to an issue which entitles the Porte to claim, and us as mediators to insist upon, the re-establishment of a Russian mission at the Porte; that our answer to Russia when her simultaneous overture was made, was that we could not discuss the plan of pacification, nor utter the word Greece at Constantinople or at St. Petersburgh, until the said negotiation of Lord Strangford had so succeeded, as it has done; and until, in consequence, the Russian mission should be so re-established as we have a right to expect it to be. That Russia having named a Minister to the Porte, has been recently contending that the condition is fulfilled, and that we (without admitting that assertion) had agreed, nevertheless, that it was so far advanced towards fulfilment that we might with propriety think of a plenipotentiary to discuss the terms of accommodation, which it might be fit to propose, as mediators to the Greeks and Turks; and that it might perhaps be advisable to suggest to both parties a cessation of hostilities in order that such discussion might begin, and such mediation be offered. So far, probably, the French Government knows all that we do; but not from us. But what it perhaps does not know yet from anybody, and certainly not from us, is that while Count Lieven and I were talking of this proposal of armistice, comes a letter to me from the Provisional Greek Government, written in August last, probably just after the receipt of the French paper containing the Russian plan of pacification, in which letter the Greeks treat that plan, which was to be the basis of deliberation, as a plan for giving them over, bound hand and foot, to the Turks, and declare that they would perish to the last man rather than submit to be negotiated about on such principles. Hereupon *we* say, halt. It might be very well to confer, and to mediate, while we had any pretence for believing or

hoping that either of the two contending parties could hail such an interference with satisfaction. But now that we know to a certainty that both parties (for the Turks had spoken their minds most uncourteously about the Russian plan already) are determined to have nothing to say to it—let us pause to reflect a little what earthly good there can be in going on.

So Stratford was ordered to unpack his portmanteau, and I came back to Ickworth, better pleased with the Greeks, than for anything that they have done since Epaminondas or (as Mr. Maxwell, the Scotch member, pronounces the other worthy) of Harry Stodgiton, meaning, it was supposed, Aristogeiton.

Then why go into any discussion upon the subject? seems a natural question. But the answer is clear. For the same reason for which Strangford has been doing Russian work for the last three years at Constantinople—to prevent if possible a war between Russia and Turkey, and all the complications to which that war must give rise. The E. of R. is, I really believe, for peace. But his council are at least divided; his army and his people are for war; and when one considers the temptation of a Turkish war—that is, a war of certain triumphs—and perhaps of inordinate success against a natural enemy, one cannot wonder at the feelings of the Russian army and people.

To gain time, therefore, and to give to the E. of R. the appearance of doing *something* towards the same object which would be to be sought in war, was the motive for not discouraging H. I. M.'s desire of consulting with his allies.

But you will see how cautious and how limited was our encouragement, and how much the chapter of accidents was relied on for delays; and it must be confessed it has in this instance served us admirably.

Upon all this matter you shall have detailed and ample information; but I do not say that you shall have it to communicate to the French Government—not a bit. We have not one word from them as to their views of this question—not one—and Polignac is utterly uninstructed upon it by his

Government, and utterly unenlightened upon it by any knowledge or researches of his own.

Their object in this, as in the Spanish question, was to let us take our line first, and theirs to find *some* line more agreeable to some party or other—to Russia and Greece, or to Turkey—one or all of these than ours, and to make a left-handed advantage by taking that line.

Radere iter lævum interior. This is the clue of their whole policy on all occasions in which we are engaged in common.

There is one question, however, upon which they must act for themselves—and they are acting; I mean, the withdrawing of their army from Spain. In that transaction, laissez faire. Ask no questions; evince no interest (I am sorry that Percy asked a question of Damas the other day); give no opinion.

Do not let Pozzo betray you into giving an opinion again. Retract the old one, if you can. Never mention the subject first, and when mentioned to you only smile, and make no confidences even as to the meaning of your smile, with your colleagues. Why? You will not really ask that question; but if you did, I must defer answering it to a future day.

For here finishes, or nearly so, the seventh sheet, and the dressing-bell has rung.

Ever, my dear Granville, &c.

GEO. CANNING.

The Conference mentioned in the preceding letter took place towards the beginning of the following year, 1825. Mr. Stratford Canning went on a special mission to St. Petersburgh. The proceedings are thus described:—

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Sudbrook, April 12, 1825.

I have heard something of the proceedings of the Conferences at St. Petersburgh; nothing could be better calcu-

lated than what I have heard to satisfy me with the position which we occupy in respect to those Conferences.

There is evidently a wide difference of opinion between the two Imperial Courts upon the first principle of the proposed intervention. Metternich flattered himself that if he could have had us in the mess, the still wider difference between (what he supposed to be) our opinions, and those both of Austria and Russia, would have brought them comparatively nearer to each other by rendering us the mark of their common attack. A clever scheme! but frustrated in the outset; and so they have been reduced to quarrel with each other.

Ask Villèle if he sees his way in this question, and tell him that it is matter of high amusement to see the strait to which Metternich is reduced between the wish to do something, and the internal conviction that there is nothing to be done; or what is as good (or as bad) as nothing—nothing but what Austria has abjured as illegitimate, or denounced as sanctioning our example.

These objections meet them at every turn, and literally block every exit from the labyrinth in which they have involved themselves. First. Let us propose to the Turks peace, and in the way to peace, armistice, says Russia. Good, says Austria; and then let us make the same proposition to the other party.

Ay, but, quoth Austria, that other party are insurgents.

True, replies Russia; but if the Turks are not reasonable, what have we to do but to take part with the Greeks, or at least to say that we will do so?

Never with my goodwill, rejoins Austria; for what is that but the very thing that we have been rebuking England for doing with Spanish America?

This is *deadlock the first.*

The second is of another fashion. We must put a stop to this horrible war, says Esterhazy to me one day.

C. Must! Why so? I do not mean to say that I should not be *glad* to put an end to it or to any other war in Europe, because wars have a tendency to propagate themselves; and I think peace necessary to all nations. But I have never

understood *why this particular* war, of all others, is selected as the one that *must* be put an end to, at whatever cost. I am quite of another opinion; I think that the cost may be much greater than the mischief.

E. Oh! this is very well for you who see these things at a distance, but to us, nearly neighbouring to the countries in which such ravages are going on, with successful insurrection before our eyes, and on our frontiers.

C. Oh, oh! You admit then that there *are* interests which justify nations in taking their own measures with regard to countries in a state of civil war?

E. Yes; but not in favour of insurgents against the parent State.

C. Nay, then; what is the meaning of the proposed intervention? Is it to put down the Greeks?

E. No; not precisely *that*. No, certainly not *that*; it is to *discountenance* the Greeks, perhaps, so far as to let them see that they can never attain their object, but to exhort the Turks to be reasonable.

C. But how if the Turks will not be reasonable?

E. Oh! in that case. . . .

C. In that case, what? What! was Spain reasonable, think you?

E. Why, certainly Spain was in a very difficult position.

C. Difficult enough, I grant; and so is Turkey. But do you mean that Turkey, as well as Spain, has a right to be as unreasonable as she pleases, and yet that the case would never arise in which it would be justifiable to deal with the Greeks as a substantive Power?

E. No; supposing the Turks could do nothing against the Greeks, and yet continued unreasonable.

C. Exactly the case of Spain, and yet what has been your language to England for dealing with Spanish America?

Such is the substance not of one, but of sundry talks that I have had at different times with Esterhazy.

The result of which is, as you see, to bring them to a deadlock in another way. Either they must make up their minds, in some supposable case (and if in *any* the principle

is admitted) to do as *we* have done (which they consider as contamination), *or* their single purpose (disguise it how they will) is to *put down the Greek insurrection.*

Now, I verily believe this to be, and to have been all along, Prince Metternich's single purpose. And his reason for wishing to go about it in a Conference with *us*, a party to that Conference, I take to be this.

He knows the Emperor of Russia not to agree with him in his single object. He knows, therefore, that if *they two* begin the discussion, they must differ. But he knows the Emperor's opinion to be not for *setting up* the Greek insurrection, but only for not putting it down. Ours, he flattered himself (very mistakenly), *would* be for *setting it up*. Our entrance into the Conference, therefore, would, by the infusion of a more violent opinion, change the position of the Emperor of Russia from extreme, and adverse to Austria, to middle between Austria and us; and then, with the help of Spanish America for a topic, and of the diverging of interest between us and Russia as to the maritime questions in Greece, Prince Metternich flattered himself that the habit of opposition to us would have led Russia by degrees to side with Austria, first as a mediator between two extreme opinions, but subsequently as adopting that one of the two to which she was the least angrily opposed.

I have little doubt that Metternich's calculations were right. Such would have been the effect of going with them into the Conference. By simply keeping away, we have left them to deal with each other, and the consequence has been the collision which Metternich wished to avoid.

What will happen next remains to be seen. The best thing for the cause would be the adjournment of the Conferences. The best thing for us that they should go on and end in nothing.

Stratford's last letters, which are of the 25th of March, and which reached me last night (by a courier of Count Lieven's), do not enable me to judge which of the results is the most likely. I expect a messenger from him every day.

Ever, my dear G., yours affectionately,

G. C.

The Emperor of Russia was so displeased with the British Government for refusing to take part in the Conferences, that he gave notice that he would not again discuss the subject with England. Towards the middle of June, 1825, there were symptoms of a disposition not to adhere too firmly to this determination; for on the 3rd of that month Mr. Canning writes:—

Everything abroad seems still. I may know what passed in the Conferences at St. Petersburgh, if I *choose* to ask Lieven or Maltzahn. But I have very little curiosity, and since the Autocrat imposed the silence, he may keep, or break it as he likes best.

The Conferences ended in a determination on the part of the three Courts to offer their mediation to the Sultan, between him and his insurgent subjects. The proposal, when made, was rejected, almost with contempt, and France, Austria, and Prussia having refused to resort to coercion in case the overture should be disregarded, the position of the Emperor was not agreeable, and the Imperial anger was roused.

The Conferences were closed in form at the latter end of August (1825), and the Emperor complained in terms of great bitterness of the treatment which he had met with from his Allies; at the same time he threw out hints that the Greek question was not the only ground of difference between Russia and Turkey; and that if Russian grievances had been abandoned for European, the failure of the latter would be a reason for more peremptorily insisting upon satisfaction upon the other points of dispute.*

---

* *Vide Political Life*, vol. ii. p. 430. The history of the diplomatic transactions on this question, is given in chapters iv. xii. and xvi. of that work.

In this state of affairs, Mr. Canning thus wrote to Lord Granville:—

August 13, 1825.

The despatches which you forwarded to me by the last messenger from Sir H. Wellesley are, indeed, in one sense satisfactory. That rogue Metternich! how provoking it must be to him to find himself placed exactly in the fissure which he had cleft for us, and forced to roar and remonstrate with his own lungs against these projects, which, when we anticipated them, he denied, and which he reserved in his own secret mind for us the trouble and the odium (with Russia) of combating and counteracting.

Silly Mr. Tomkins! (as I heard one of the Littleton girls singing the other night) if the Emperor of Russia acquiesces in the rebuff of the Porte, sillier if he threatens war, and is afterwards deterred from making it, by such arguments as Metternich is prepared to bring against his purpose, which are, in truth, only the wrong side outwards of those which I used, interrogatively, last year; when, if he could either have answered, or admitted them to be (as they were) unanswerable, he (Metternich) might have saved himself and his Government the regret of having made a very foolish figure. But now, and, from Metternich, after all the counsel they have had together, to be driven from his purpose by arguments against interference coming from his accomplice in all sorts of interferences, I must own that I shall think more meanly of Alexander than I have ever done hitherto, if he exhibits a docility so very supple, and surprising.

Yet to go to war against the protestation of Austria and of France, and with England, long ago protesting, and now unfettered by any pledge or participation of council, standing by! I cannot believe that he will risk it. My reflections come back, therefore, like Miss Littleton's song, to 'silly Mr. Tomkins.' Metternich has to thank his own *finesse*, if he, and not I, is the cruel Polly Hopkins who steps between Mr. T. and his desires.

Villèle, I suppose, can wish no other than to see his two —two great allies at this dead lock; but I should like to see

his answer to this Russian proposition, which Wellesley represents as even more decided than that of Austria. I rejoice that Prussia has blundered; it is the least wise Court in Europe, as Werther is the least wise of Prussian Ministers, and therefore likely enough to be recalled to succeed to the post of First Minister on Bernstorff's retirement.

I have never had occasion to take any trouble about Berlin yet, but if Werther gets there, I think I may find some amusement in playing him a little.

Why is it that Prussia is so much the most irrational of all the Allied Powers, and pronounces herself always in the most unmeasured and unsuitable terms? Saved, if ever country was, by the voluntary impulse of the people, why is it that the Government of Prussia is of all Governments the most ostentatiously anti-popular in its politics? Can Pozzo tell? You might propound it to him amicably, as a question which you are curious to have solved.

The consequence of the disagreements between the Allied Powers, and the known alteration of Mr. Canning's position with his own Court (which has been already described) led the Russian Government to begin to look to him for assistance; and before the end of October of the very year in which the Alliance had been offended by the recognition of Spanish America, and the Czar had declared that he would not in any way discuss the subject of Greece with the British Government, the Russian ambassador had expressed his wish to Mr. Canning, that he would take the question into his own hands, since Great Britain was the only Power which could bring the state of affairs in Greece to a satisfactory settlement.

On the 25th of October, 1825, he thus writes from Seaford:—

My dear Liverpool,

Enclosed is a memorandum of what passed with Lieven yesterday, when he came over from Brighton (according to an appointment made in town) to pay me a visit.

He was delighted with the permission to come, and has, I verily believe, opened his whole mind to me.

Certainly we have had no such confidence from any other of the continental Powers.

The wrath against Austria, or rather against Prince Metternich, is great, and I must own not undeserved. I begin to think that the time approaches when *something* must be done; but not till Austria as well as France has put into our hands the dealing—first with Russia, and then with the parties to the war. I am quite clear that there is no honesty in Metternich, and that we cannot enter into joint concert with him, without the certainty of being betrayed.

It is not only his practice, but in our case it will be his pride and pleasure.

At least, however, we now know clearly enough the points of difference between us and the Alliance generally, and between the members of the Alliance among themselves, and we know our points of agreement.

Ever yours, G. C.

Mr. Canning had not long to wait for the anticipated step being taken by the ambassadors of France and Austria. This appears from the following letter to Lord Granville, within only a fortnight after the preceding one shortly after his return to London.

(*Private and Political.*)

My dear Granville, Foreign Office, Nov. 8, 1825.

The despatches to Stuart and Strangford, which I send for your perusal to-day, will put you fully in possession of my Turco-Greco-Russian politics.

You have sent Huskisson back in a most philhellenic temper, but I think he is satisfied upon reading what I

have written, and upon hearing what I have to say, that I have done as much as it was safe, or prudent to do at present.

The Turks may so receive Stratford's overture as to make another more useful or practicable. But in whatever direction that move is made, to do any good we must make it *alone*. Combined operation is nonsense in a case in which the principles on which we and our Allies act, are as different as the objects at which we respectively aim.

Do you imagine that I should ever have settled the question between Portugal and Brazil, had I let Russia and Prussia have voices in it; or even if I had not shaken off Austria, as a co-agent, when we came to the practical issue? I need not ask you what help France would have been in it, seeing what she attempted the last moment at the risk of failure, and with the certainty of detection. There is not a grain of faith in *her*, nor of directness in any one of them, except indeed in Prussia, who is a downright grenadier who has no notion of politics but the drum-head and cat-o'-nine-tails.

I flatter myself I sent Polignac away to-day in a perplexity. I should like to know how he represents our conversation. The only point that I made, or meant to make clear to him was '*point d'intervention armée.*' For the rest I wished to leave him as much at sea as possible. He spoke over to me Damas's speech to you, about the danger of letting the Emperor of Russia find his way to Constantinople.

'But if that is what you dread,' said I, 'do you not see 'that your proposal of a combined intervention leads him 'there quite as directly as leaving him alone?'

'How so?'

'Why, just as the Congress at Verona led you into Spain. 'Recollect the principle upon which Russia calls upon her 'allies is that of the Holy Alliance. The Alliance is according to the Emperor of Russia's doctrine, and I suppose according to yours (for I do not know that France has disavowed it), a combination of the great Powers to preserve the general peace of the world—by—not only preventing the conflict of nations with each other, but quelling or crushing in

'the bud their internal dissensions. Every State Paper of 'the Emperor of Russia upon the Greek question—I beg 'you to read them all through when you go home—places 'the proposed intervention between Turkey and Greece upon 'this footing. Piedmont and Naples were disturbed, says 'he; Allied Europe saw the danger, and Austria, as the neigh- 'bouring Power, was deputed as the agent of Allied Europe, '*y mettre ordre*. Spain was in a state of anarchy, Allied 'Europe consulted, armed intervention was decided upon, 'and France, as the neighbouring Power, was commissioned 'to carry that decision into effect. Here is a third case in the 'convulsions of the Turkish Empire. Let Allied Europe 'meet again, and by analogy and implication not to be re- 'sisted, let the neighbouring Power be deputed to set those 'convulsions at rest. This I can tell you, if you do not 'already know it, is H.I.M.'s meaning when he summons a 'Congress upon Turkey and Greece. Nor do I see how it is 'possible for *vous autres*, members of the Holy Alliance, 'and especially for you, France (who as I say were sent by 'the Holy Alliance into Spain, where by the way you still 'remain) to avoid following out the principles of Laybach 'and Verona, in a case which, if once admitted, they are to 'the full as applicable as in either of the preceding ones. 'We who protested against the decision of Verona, and, in 'some sort, of Laybach, are at liberty to protest against the 'Emperor of Russia's march to Constantinople in a repre- 'sentative capacity, as in his personal one. But you can 'only consistently protest against it, if he acts from himself, 'and therefore *you* must avoid the Congress, in which he 'would seek and obtain (if you follow out your own princi- 'ples) a delegated authority to do the very thing which you 'most dread his doing.'

There was a great deal more of this chiefly to puzzle and plague him, and to enable him to puzzle, and plague his perfidious Government, the former of which effects it certainly had, and I live in hopes that it will have the other. But though the object was thus illegitimate, the reasoning is legitimate in all its points.

The Emperor of Russia's meaning *is* what I describe it to be. And he is, *quoad* the Holy Alliance, in the right.

It is, however, some satisfaction to find the members of that illustrious body coming one by one to confess that we alone can help them out of their difficulties.

So has said Count Lieven. So Prince Esterhazy, and so to-day Prince Polignac; in terms more unqualified than either of the other two. The *Pruss* I never see.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GREEK AFFAIRS — DEATH OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER — DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S MISSION TO ST. PETERSBURGH — GREEK PROTOCOL — GREEK TREATY.

THE death of the Emperor Alexander took place unexpectedly at Taganrog, on the 1st day of December, 1825.

Before his Imperial Majesty's death Lord Strangford, who had won Mr. Canning's good opinion, by the skill and judgment which he had displayed at Constantinople, had been sent as ambassador to St. Petersburgh. He there made certain unauthorized proposals to the Russian Government, which it was necessary to disavow. It was consequently thought advisable to send some distinguished person to converse with the new Emperor, and to ascertain his real sentiments. The choice fell on the Duke of Wellington; the decision is thus made known to Lord Granville:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, Jan. 13, 1826.

MY DEAR GRANVILLE,

I have determined to send the Duke of Wellington to Petersburgh. I proposed it to the King almost as soon as the event was known; but his Majesty doubted—solely, however, on the ground of the Duke's health. I persuaded his Majesty to let me try the question upon the Duke, with an express intimation of his Majesty's commands that he

should not undertake the mission, unless he felt himself strong enough to go through with it, and unless his medical advisers concurred in the same opinion. The Duke not only accepted, but *jumped*, as I foresaw that he would, at the proposal. 'Never better in his life,' 'ready to set out in a week,' and the like expressions of alertness, leave no doubt upon my mind that the selection of *another* person would have done his health more prejudice, than all the frosts or thaws of the hyperborean regions can do to it.

It is only this morning that I have been able (partly from the Duke's absence from town—but partly, also, from my own incessant occupations) to have a full talk with the Duke of Wellington. I am perfectly satisfied, and so, I believe, is he: he with my intentions, and I with his disposition to execute them, not only fairly, but strenuously.

I have since seen Lieven (for the first time since he has lost his master), who received the information of the Duke's destination—first with astonishment, and then, *literally*, with tears of pleasure, at having to announce to his Court such a proof of my resolution to carry into effect the system of renewed confidence which I had opened to him (Lieven) in October, and which Strangford has taken such ingenious pains to demolish.

His astonishment was on account of former differences (of which Lieven knew, perhaps, more than I do myself), and also of presumed differences on the subject of Russia itself, and of the Greek question; Lieven *knowing* my intentions (as I have said), and believing (as he told me at Brighton two months ago) the Duke of Wellington to be rather in the opinions which Strangford has attempted to substitute for mine. Are you astonished too? Perhaps so. But you are both wrong. The Duke of Wellington would not have done for any purpose of mine a twelvemonth ago. No more would confidence with Russia. But now—the ultra system being dissolved, by the carrying of every point which they opposed—the elements of that system have become useable for good purposes. I hope to save Greece through the agency of the Russian name upon the fears of Turkey,

without a war, which the Duke of Wellington is the fittest man to deprecate; and I send the Duke of Wellington to the autocrat, without any apprehension that he will dream in his own head, or put into the autocrat's, any chimera of a new Holy Alliance. *De plus*—the Duke of Wellington is the only agent by whom I could suppress, and extinguish Strangford.

The enclosed copy of my private letter to Stratford, by the last messenger, will put you as much in possession of my notions, as I am yet master of them myself. Return it, for I have no other copy.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—*Observe*—The Duke of Wellington's appointment is a profound secret, known only to the King, Liverpool, Lieven, and himself, beyond the staff of this office.

In a letter, dated April 4, after the Duke had been a short time at St. Petersburgh, Mr. Canning writes to Lord Granville:—

To say the truth—Nicholas puzzles me exceedingly, and seems to have puzzled the Duke of Wellington, and perhaps himself.

The policy which he now professes, is anything but Alexander's policy. Else,—if that, indeed, were Alexander's policy at bottom,—why, in the name of common sense, have we been plagued for the last three years with *Memoires* upon Greece, and obligations to *co-religionnaires*, and been so often reproached by Russia for our apathy on behalf of a Christian people?

There is one comfort, however, in this turn of affairs. It will enable you to plague Werther. Stimulate him by coldness, and apparent dissent, to a high Greek crusading tone; and then see how he will look, when he comes to learn from his Court that the Greeks are, after all, rebels, and not worthy of the sympathy of a legitimate Government.

Meantime, however, it is difficult to deal with Nicholas; and, as to his advisers, no man knows where to find them.

The following to Lord Granville, dated April 14, 1826, shows that Mr. Canning was not quite pleased with his special ambassador:—

No messenger yet from the Duke: but anything that he can bring is known from Paris to most of the Foreign Ministers here. The only thing that they do not know (or, so far as I can make out, suspect) is, that the Duke of Wellington is in Nicholas's confidence as to intentions. The one thing that I cannot understand is why the Duke has been so much more brisk in his communications to you and Lord Clanwilliam than to me. It is not for want of messengers at his disposal.

I do not know any more than you do, on what the Duke of Wellington grounds his hopes that the peace between Russia and Turkey will not be interrupted. And I cannot help calling to mind, that he returned from Verona with exactly the same professions of confidence, respecting the non-execution of the project for the invasion of Spain.

Polignac has just now communicated to me the moanings and apprehensions of his Government.

Four days later he writes:—

I have got no intelligence from the Duke of Wellington. He was to despatch a messenger from St. Petersburgh on the 1st, who ought to have been here before this time.

He will now bring me nothing that all the world does not already know; except, indeed, the information whether the note transmitted to M. Minciacky* is according to the original text communicated by the Emperor to the Duke; or, as altered according to the Duke's suggestions. For many reasons I hope the former.

The note referred to had been shown to the Duke, after it had been sent off two days; but he was unfairly led to believe that it might still be altered, which induced him to offer some suggestions, which

* The Russian Chargé d'Affaires at the Porte.

are those to which the letter alludes, and which, of course, could not have been adopted.

In the memorandum (mentioned in the last chapter) which was given by Prince Lieven to Mr. Canning at Seaford in October, it was asserted that

> Before Ibrahim Pacha's army was put in motion, an agreement was entered into by the Porte with the Pacha of Egypt, that whatever part of Greece Ibrahim might conquer should be at his disposal; and that the Pacha's plan for disposing of his conquest was (and was stated by the Porte to be, and had been approved by the Porte) to remove the whole Greek population, carrying them off into slavery in Egypt, or elsewhere, and to repeople the country with Egyptians, and others of the Mahometan religion.

So atrocious a design at first sight appeared to Mr. Canning incredible, but the reports of British Officials in the East established its truth, notwithstanding that the Porte at first denied it. On April 25, 1826, he writes:—

> The Porte stoutly denies, or rather the Reis Effendi has, in a private audience, given Stratford* to understand that the Porte *will* deny the existence of any such plan as that attributed to Ibrahim Pacha. Ibrahim on his part gave no other answer to Captain Spencer (whom Sir Frederick Adam sent to put the question to him) than that he (Ibrahim) was only the servant of the Porte, and that to the Porte the application must be made, if we wished for information. This answer led me to suspect the imputation to be true. We shall see to what extent the Porte goes in its written reply to an official note, which Stratford was about to present on the subject.

The result of the Duke's mission to the Czar was the signature of the celebrated Protocol between Great Britain and Russia,† which regulated the action of the two

* Mr. Stratford Canning, now Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.

† Inserted at length in *Political Life*, vol. ii. p. 487.

Powers in the affairs of the East, whereby the Greek question was brought into a train of settlement, with the co-operation of Russia, but without affording to Russia opportunities of undue aggrandizement.

The Protocol was to be communicated to the other Allies, who were to be invited to become parties to it.

Before, however, any steps were taken for this object a fresh complication arose, from the conduct of the French Government in denying to the Greeks a national flag. Mr. Canning thus argues upon the measure—

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Brighton, June 22, 1826.

As part of the Greek question I forbear writing anything *official* to you on the new concert between Austria and France, to extinguish the Greek marine. When you see Villèle you may tell him from me that he has come to what appears to me to be a very formidable resolution. To make the whole navy of a country, whether mercantile or warlike, responsible for the abuse of the national flag, in certain instances, is at least a new doctrine of international law. To deny a national flag to insurgents is not certainly a *new* doctrine. It is, indeed, that which Austria has plainly and publicly maintained from the very beginning of the Greek struggle. But it is new to *France* (I think) in this particular struggle. It is new in *principle* as applied by France to the present state of the world, in which the ships of many States, whose insurgent character has not been done away, *quoad* France, by French acknowledgment, sail unmolested in seas frequented by French ships of war, and are received into French harbours. It is not, therefore, the *mere insurgency* of the Greeks that constitutes their flag a nullity in the eyes of the French Government, and their *unoffending* vessels pirates; because on that principle the Spanish American ships would be liable to the same proscription. Is it the piratical character of *some* that occasions the denial of national character and belligerent rights to *all* Greek vessels? But, surely, it is enough to

punish the piratical acts upon the doers of them. *That* course the law of nations prescribes; and the inability of the Government to repress the excesses, which its flag is made to cover, justifies. So far, *we* go with France. But there we think it expedient to stop; because if we go further and hold with M. Villèle that the inability of the Greek Government to keep its population in order, justifies an appeal to that Government, and reprisals in case of the fruitlessness of such an appeal; and if we further hold with Austria (and I fear *now* with France) that the Greek Government is itself a mere insurrection, without national rights or national duties, *then the Government* to which appeal is to be made, is the *Turkish* Government itself; and out of *that* appeal, fruitless as we know it must be, would grow irresistibly a right to interfere forcibly, for the termination of a state of things so injurious to the peaceful commerce of civilized Europe.

M. Villèle cannot, I am of opinion (even with Metternich to back him), consider the Greek Government as bad for one purpose and good for another—bad, as an authority to give consistency to its nation, but good, as to its responsibility for the acts of those whom it calls its subjects. If the piratical practices of *some* Greek ships is visited upon the Greek Government, then, the Greek Government itself being only one great act of piracy, the Porte is responsible for its consequences.

We are consistent. We acknowledge Algiers to be a separate and responsible power, although subject to the Porte as its *suzérain*. To some such state as this, the Greek Revolution tends. If other powers of Europe refuse to acknowledge that tendency, and actually resort to force to resist it, *we* may some day or other have to reconsider our *admission* as to the state of Algiers, and to visit upon the Porte the next outrage of its *barbaresque* provinces.

In truth, why are we, or any other Power, bound to admit any distinction between the Turkish possessions in Africa? Why is Egypt a province? Would Europe suffer the Algerines to invade the Morea? I cannot believe it. Why, then, the Egyptians? Is the Pacha of Egypt less powerful, less practically independent, than the Dey of Algiers? And does *France*, of all other nations in Europe, think him so?

I throw out these considerations not as constituting *a system* which I am desirous of establishing, but as a caution to M. Villèle not to stir abstract questions, by making any practical innovation in the course which France and we have hitherto concurred in pursuing (wisely, I think) towards the Greeks; and by countenancing those doctrines, which are only ultra-legitimate and innocuous in Austria, but which, if avowed and brought into action by France, must lead to a reconsideration of our whole course of conduct in the Greek and Turkish war.

Ever affectionately yours,
G. C.

The next four letters relate to the steps which were to be taken in communicating the Protocol to the Allies:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Aug. 7, 1826.

We are just setting off for Brighton; but I answer your despatch (just received) before I go, and I add this letter to explain my official answer.

We must proceed in this Greek business with caution and good heed, for I have considerable *difficulty* in my way; not the least of which arises with the signer of the protocol himself. I see my way, however, and will get through to the end, but it must be, as old Lord Chatham used to say, *gradatim*.

Our first communication to the Allies will be simply *of the Protocol* itself, in fulfilment of our promise that full communication thereof should be made, when Lieven returned here.

The mode of giving effect to the principles of the Protocol will be to be communicated hereafter. It must first be settled here. The settlement, at this moment of general dispersion, will take time; and I do not expect to send off my final instructions to Stratford till after the 5th of next month, the day to which the Cabinet is adjourned.

Not many days after I do send them off, I hope to follow them as far as Paris.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Brighton, Aug. 8, 1826,

Count Lieven came down here yesterday. We shall exchange notes or letters on the subject of the Protocol to-day, copies of which, with a despatch directing the communication to be made to the French Government, will be sent by me to you, and by Lieven to Pozzo, on Tuesday. Observe, this first step will be little more than a communication; and it will not invite—though, of course, it will not preclude—an answer. It will not *invite* one, because there is danger that an answer prematurely given might contain the very natural reflection, how can we engage to guarantee, we know not *what*.

The protocol, I need not observe to you, is not very artistically drawn; and the last paragraph of it, to which I particularly refer, is calculated to provoke such an answer as I apprehend.

The next communication will be more in detail.

But the third, and last, of my instructions to Stratford will not (as I told you, I think, in my last letter) be ready till September, when it will precede me to Paris by about ten days.

By the way, would it not be as well that you should get into some of the Paris newspapers, as an article of ordinary intelligence, the announcement of my coming to Paris, some time this summer, on a visit to you, to avoid (if possible) the swelling of that visit into a Congress.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Sept. 1826.

Here is the second *livraison* of our Turco-Greekish communications. After full deliberation, we have determined that this is all we can say, until Lieven shall receive an answer from his Court to my third letter, of which I put him in possession yesterday, and which he sends off by a courier this evening.

Count Lieven professes not to have the smallest doubt of the implicit adoption by his Court of the views of the British Government as developed in my letter, but until officially assured of that concurrence, he does not feel himself at liberty to say anything to Pozzo, or any one else, upon a *pending reference.*

Under these circumstances, I think it better not to send you anything further at present than what Lieven sends to Pozzo; and that the despatches to Stratford (which will go by a messenger to-morrow) should not go under flying seal to you (or of course to Henry Wellesley).

The despatches to Stratford carry instructions dependent (in a certain degree) for their execution on the answer of the Russian Cabinet to Lieven's reference, which answer will be known at Constantinople as soon as here; and (in a certain other degree) upon the issue of the negotiations at Ackermann, of which Stratford will be sooner apprised than I shall.

We calculate that Lieven may expect the return of his courier about the 8th or 10th of next month. He will immediately forward what he receives from his Court to me at Paris; so that I hope, before I leave you, to enable you to make the final communication to the French Government.

Meantime, I shall bring with me the third *livraison,* and a fortnight hence Lieven will not feel the same difficulty, which he feels at this moment, about a *confidential* disclosure to you, and perhaps to Pozzo.

To the French Government it is obvious nothing can properly be disclosed until we *know* that Russia and we are entirely agreed.

If I alter the time of my arrival at Paris at all, it will be to advance it a day, not to retard it.

I hope to be able to get away on Tuesday morning. Whether, in so doing, we shall conveniently arrive on Friday I am not sure; we must try.

I have taken leave of the King and of my colleagues.

I am to see Alcudia* to-morrow; he has timed his arrival most unluckily.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private—Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Salt Hill, Sept. 1, 1826.

You will receive by Tuesday's courier, not only the second *livraison*, which I promised you and authorized you to promise to Pozzo in my despatch of this day, but the third and concluding No. of my series of letters to Lieven. I do not authorize you to promise this to Pozzo, because Lieven and I have not yet decided as to the expediency of communicating it to him. It certainly cannot be communicated to the Allies until Lieven is enabled by instructions from his Court to answer it; until that is done it could not be considered a *joint* communication.

The way in which it will come under your cognizance will be in a despatch to Stratford, which I will send to you under flying seal. The letter itself is finished; I have shown it to Lieven, who is delighted with it. I shall submit it to-morrow to the Cabinet, which may then disperse itself, and leave me to clear my office alone.

This letter to Lieven is, in fact and in substance, my instruction to Stratford; and the consent of the Emperor of Russia to all that it proposes will, probably, be signified to Stratford at Constantinople (through M. Ribeaupiérre, if Ackermann ends well) as soon as I ever learn it from Lieven. I may possibly receive Stratford's acknowledgment while I am with you at Paris. I allow myself a clear month there—

---

* The Spanish Minister.

from the 16th of September to the 14th, or perhaps the 16th of October. I have sent a messenger by the last packet to Sir W. à Court, that he may have the means of writing to me direct to Paris. Will you take the trouble to write to Lamb and to Sir H. Wellesley, to warn them to send their messengers invariably through Paris while I am there? I think this better than writing myself, which would give my visit an air of officiality that I wish to avoid.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

The reception by the Prussian Government of this communication called forth the observations which follow, addressed to Mr. Temple, the British Minister at the Court of Berlin:—

Foreign Office, 19 September, 1826.

I have received yours reporting the execution of the instructions, respecting the Protocol of St. Petersburgh of April 4th, which were conveyed to you by Count Lieven's messenger.

It is highly agreeable to me that the communication which you have been authorized to make (in concert with the Russian Minister) to the Prussian Government, should have been so properly acknowledged and appreciated.

But I cannot forbear remarking upon some of the observations with which Count Bernstorff accompanied, and perhaps in a certain degree qualified, his expressions of acceptance and approbation.

Count Bernstorff is willing to believe that the course now adopted by the British Government with regard to Greek affairs, is that which has been for the last three or four years recommended by the continental Allies, and by none more frequently and more earnestly (it must be confessed) than by Prussia, and to regret that it was not adopted earlier.

Count Bernstorff appears entirely to overlook the variations which distinguish the present measure from any suggestions (measures they could hardly be called) which, for the last three years, have been pressed upon us by the Allies.

The objections which we have always stated to those suggestions have been—(1.) That neither the Porte nor the Greeks having shown the slightest disposition to depart from their respective extreme pretensions—the Porte from that of a complete restoration of its unqualified sovereignty, the Greeks from that of total independence—the attempt to mediate between them *unasked* was utterly hopeless of any useful result. (2.) That such an attempt was not only likely to be useless, but was, in *our* eyes, improper, as assuming a right, on the part of the Alliance, to interfere in the concerns of nations, as if in virtue of some inherent authority of supervision and control; a pretension which we have never sanctioned in principle, which we denied after Laybach, and at Verona, and which we could not be induced to countenance even by all the topics and adjurations derived from the peculiar nature of the struggle in Greece, with which the Russian Cabinet repeatedly endeavoured to shake our resolution.

The third objection which we felt to engaging in any scheme of intervention hitherto proposed to us, was, that we never before could succeed in extracting, from the Powers proposing it, a direct answer to the very natural and not unimportant questions—'Do you mean to go to war with 'Turkey, or with Greece, whichever may be the recusant 'party? or, with *one* of them only in case of such recusancy? 'and with which?'

To these questions it was generally answered, that it would be time enough to discuss them when once an intervention was decided; that, in fact, they were the questions to be discussed at the Conference to which we were invited.

As if, after Laybach and Verona, it was likely that we would go again into a Conference, at the risk of appearing to lend the authority of the British name to principles which we might be (as after Laybach) under the necessity of disavowing, and to measures against which we might protest, as at Verona, in vain.

Now, in the present instance, all these three objections are obviated.

First, it was declared to our ambassador to the Porte, on his way to Constantinople, by certain leaders of the Greeks, speaking in the name of their compatriots, that they desisted from the claim of unlimited independence, and were prepared to accede to some arrangement on the basis laid down in the protocol.

On these intimations the protocol was framed. There was at least a hope of success which had never been presented before, when one of the two parties consented to lower its extreme demands.

Secondly. Before the protocol was acted upon, the intimations received by Mr. Stratford Canning on his way to his post, were converted into a direct and formal application from the Greek Government to his Excellency, to mediate for them in the name of his Government with the Porte. Here is a direct authority for intervention, not growing out of a self-assumed right in any Power, or combination of Powers, to dictate to both of two belligerent parties, but in the solicitation of one of those parties for a mediatorial intervention according to the wholesome and established usage of nations.

When so solicited, however, we grasped not at the request of our single mediation. No such thing. Our answer to the Greeks was, indeed, affirmative for ourselves. But we declared, at the same time, our determination to defer the carrying that assurance into effect until we should have consulted our Allies, and invited their co-operation. We do so; and we are desirous of acting with our Allies cordially and confidentially in what is now in our eyes, as well as theirs, a legitimate intervention.

Thirdly. The protocol disposes of the question of *war for Greece* in a way which must satisfy the apprehensions of those Powers (not Prussia), who were thinking of separate combinations and undertakings against the consequences of such a war (if it should arise), as a necessary sequel or accompaniment to a joint intervention with Russia in the affairs of Greece and Turkey. Upon this point it is not necessary to enlarge, nor would it be seemly to do so after

the frank and self-denying obligations which the signing parties to the protocol have voluntarily imposed upon themselves.

Count Bernstorff will, therefore, see that, so far is our intention to execute the protocol of April from being a late conversion of England to the principles and plans of intervention so long inculcated by the Allies, and particularly by the Court of Berlin, we, in fact, avail ourselves of the first opportunity that has offered itself to interfere in the dispute between the Porte and the Greeks on definite grounds, and in the intelligible character of mediation; at the same time that we are as desirous as the rest of our Allies to avail ourselves also of a concerted co-operation, when we can do so consistently with those principles which we have never ceased to avow.

You will take an opportunity of making known the substance of this communication, in the most amicable tone, to the Prussian Minister.

I am, &c. &c.

GEORGE CANNING.

The Hon. William Temple, &c. &c.

During September and October (1826), Mr. Canning passed a month in Paris. On the 16th of October he writes to Lord Liverpool:—

Pozzo has received a courier from his Court, announcing one sent at the same time to Lieven, with complete and satisfactory answers to our last Greek communication. I may expect the rebound of the London courier in a couple of days.

I have had a long conversation with Baron Damas on the arrival of Pozzo's courier. France is perfectly ready to go with us through all that we propose; but the French Ministers apprehend that we shall gain little by any measures from which every species of coercion is excluded. They suggest, therefore, or rather, in the course of conversation, it was suggested, as a question worthy of deliberation, whether,

every other effort failing, we might not say, 'The war shall 'not go on.' I asked Damas, 'Were they ready to apply 'that decision to the Pacha of Egypt?' He said, "Yes, 'conjointly with us, if we had no difficulty in applying it to 'the Greeks.' I said, 'You mean, of course, the cessation 'of naval war, and therewith the prohibition of further sup- 'plies of men from Egypt, *not* the landing in Greece to 'control operations there.' He said, 'Undoubtedly, I 'mean *that* which you would have done to Ibrahim Pacha, '(supposing the information respecting his plans to have 'been substantiated), only applied impartially to enforce an 'armistice, instead of unilaterally to prevent one particular 'course of warfare.'

The obvious motive—at least, one obvious motive for this plan, on the part of the French Government, is, that they may have some separate understanding with us, to balance the separate understanding and co-operation with Russia. It was in the King's head plainly, when I had my audience of his Majesty. I said I would think of the suggestion, and talk with my Government; but that, if adopted, it must grow out of the measures now in hand, not be laid down beforehand.

The question of armistice to be left completely open; and the interference, if it was put in practice, might be connected with that question.

Damas was very desirous, as Villèle had been, of the conversion of the protocol into a treaty. To which I have no objection, in due time. It will merge the difficulty of guarantee.

In the private audience which Mr. Canning had with Charles X., of which mention is made in this letter to Lord Liverpool, his Majesty expressed himself, with great warmth and zeal, on behalf of his *co-religionaires*—the Greeks. He declared his resolution not to stand by and see them exterminated by the Turks and Egyptians. His Majesty's mind

was made up to any amount of coercion which might be necessary to prevent so deplorable a catastrophe.

Mr. Canning left Paris on the 25th of October, and on the 12th of November he writes to Lord Granville:—

"I hope rather than expect to send you your instructions with the third *livraison* of Greece. Russia wants to go too fast, and the Duke of Wellington, on the other hand, goes too slow. I am for labouring at an approximation; but it is not easy, though I shall manage it at last.

The following letter to Lord Liverpool shows the further progress of the affair:—

(*Private.*)

Foreign Office, Dec. 22, 1826,
Half-past P.M.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

Lieven entirely concurs in this draft, and will write to Pozzo in conformity with it.

I am persuaded that if we hold out absolutely and inflexibly on the question of guarantee, the whole project will fall to the ground.

But surely a guarantee, limited in object, and common to *all* the Powers, cannot be very onerous to us.

What I would never guarantee is the Turkish Empire (which I suspect to be in Austria's head); but the guarantee of our own work in Greece, with five or six auxiliaries, I think we *may* venture; though, you see, I do not promise even *that*.

France is acting as fairly as possible by us, and with us; in respect to Portugal. I know they are impatient for an answer about Greece.

Polignac is in a humour to spoil all; and, therefore, I prefer Paris for the seat of discussion.

Ever yours sincerely,

GEO. CANNING.

In the course of the following year (1827) the protocol was converted into a treaty. This treaty was Mr. Canning's last act which had reference to Greece. Had he lived to use his influence and authority in carrying out its stipulations, it is not too much to say that Turkey would have been freed from a desolating intestine strife, Greece would have been freed from the tyranny and oppression of Turkish rulers, whilst, at the same time, by the payment of a moderate tribute, she would have contributed to the financial prosperity of the Porte; whilst Russia was bound by positive stipulation, both with France and Great Britain, neither to seek nor to accept exclusive commercial advantages, or any territorial aggrandizement.

How it came to pass that all these fair prospects were marred, belongs to another page of history.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OCCUPATION OF SPAIN BY THE FRENCH ARMY—COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT RESPECTING IT.

ALTHOUGH the decisive step taken by the British Government in recognising the independence of the Spanish American colonies served materially to diminish both the danger and the disparagement arising to England out of the occupation of Spain by a French army, yet Mr. Canning continued anxious for the restoration of the natural state of things by the withdrawal of that army.

His views on this point are detailed in the following letter—written, it should be observed, before the Cabinet meetings, at which was decided the recognition of the independence of Mexico and Columbia:—

(*Private—Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 6, 1824.

The instruction which you receive to-day, as it is the first, so may it probably be one of the most delicate that you are called upon to execute. The result of it may be very important, and you must therefore employ all your address and all your amenity in obtaining it.

What is wanted is a positive disavowal of any design of retaining Cadiz, and a fixed term for the evacuation of it and the other fortresses, but of Cadiz especially.

This instruction is the fruit of two days' rather stormy discussion. There are those among us who would rather see the French permanently in Cadiz, than the risk of a new Spanish Revolution. But such is not the sense of the majority.

We met on Wednesday, after an interval of more than three months. This is the business that appeared to me most urgent. I brought it before my colleagues through the memorandum of which I enclose a copy.

Comparing the memorandum with the despatch, you may judge how I have been combated. The measure, however, is carried: and you must now help it through with all your means. It would be a most serious question that would arise in case of failure.

I presume you will ask to see Villèle; though for form's sake you must, I suppose, address yourself first to Damas: but it is upon Villèle that I hope you may make an impression.

He certainly is not insensible to the dangers of a rupture with England. The Ultras (and *perhaps* Polignac among them) are, I rather apprehend, by no means indisposed to a quarrel.

In aid of your reasoning I send you—

1. The papers laid before Parliament in April, 1823, in which the three conditions of our neutrality are laid down.

2. My speech in the debate on those papers, in which those conditions are enforced.

3. My speech *this* year on Lord John Russell's motion for papers on the French occupation of Spain; in which, induced thereto by Polignac's solemn assurances, I expressed my entire reliance on the good faith of France in this respect, and *for* which I received through Polignac the thanks of the French Government.

If, after all this, they should now play us false, there would be an end for ever of confidence, either official or personal between us.

This is a consideration which, I think, might touch Villèle; though Damas would probably only report what you said to Pozzo, who would press so much the more the continued and unconditional occupation.

The treaty with Spain may have been renewed, and, as heretofore, with a clause for further renewal. If not, to avoid such clause; if the clause has been admitted, to get rid

of it, is the point which you are to drive with the greatest pertinacity.

Go to work without delay: and as soon as you have any result to send to me, send it off by special messenger, without waiting for the ordinary day of courier.

It would be very desirable that we should receive it in the course of next week, if possible.

Our series of Cabinets will probably extend to this day se'ennight.

I am, &c

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S. I send a special messenger with this, to outrun the bag. Lose not a moment, and let us have him back as soon as you can. We may surely have him by Thursday, or at latest Friday. G. C.

Notwithstanding the step taken with respect to Mexico and Columbia, Mr. Canning remained anxious at the continuance of the occupation:—

(*Private and Political.*)

Gloucester Lodge, April 29, 1825.

MY DEAR GRANVILLE,

Although I cannot yet write myself, I will not omit to acknowledge your private political letter by the last messenger. You may tell M. de Villèle, that upon the assurances it contains I shall be perfectly ready, if pressed in Parliament, to declare that I am satisfied of the intention of the French Government to withdraw their army, with all practicable celerity, from Spain; and that I am convinced that all the rumours of fortifications at Cadiz, and all suspicions of a design to retain possession of that fortress beyond the time necessary for completing the evacuation safely, are groundless.

I have not the least doubt but that such a declaration on my part will put an end to all debate or cavil on these subjects; but, then, if this declaration should hereafter be falsified by the event, I can never venture on such an expedient, or expect the like credit again. I shall be glad, there-

fore, to hear from you again, after you have communicated what I now write to M. de Villèle. There will be plenty of time for me to do so before any debate on foreign politics can occur, as I am not likely to be able to resume my attendance in the House of Commons till, at soonest, the beginning of the week after next.

I should be very willing to add to the declaration which I have already described the further one, that so long as the present Ministry in France continues, I rely confidently on the continuance not only of peace, but of good understanding between the two countries. I think such a declaration would do good. M. de Villèle must judge whether it would do good *to him*.

Believe me always,

Very affectionately yours,

G. C.

(*Private—Political.*)

Foreign Office, July 1, 1825,
Half-past Six P.M.

My dear Granville,

On moving the adjournment of the House just now, I was asked a question by Brougham (as I expected) touching the occupation of Spain.

I answered in the sense and spirit in which I authorized you to tell Villèle I *would* answer on the faith of his assurances; and so the matter dropped.

But now let Villèle recollect that *my* faith is pledged to Parliament and to the country, in confidence that he will redeem it.

In your conversation with him, I think in March, he expressed a hope and a belief that not a French soldier would be in Spain on the 1st of January, 1826. If Lamb is not too sanguine, the occasion for their presence there will be greatly diminished; but be the occasion what it may, it cannot be more urgent than it appeared likely to be when Villèle expressed the hope, which it solely depends upon him, and it is as much his interest as ours, to realize.

Yours, in great haste, to save the French mail,

G. C.

When Parliament was about to meet, in February, 1826, this letter was written.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Jan. 24, 1826.

As on two former occasions, I have now to desire that, preparatory to the meeting of Parliament, you will call on M. Villèle and ask him from me, what I am to say about the French troops in Spain? Make him understand that I do not mean to *tracasser* him (as indeed he must admit that I have been remarkably still and abstinent upon this subject); that I comprehend the difficulties of his position, and wish to avoid augmenting them; that I rely implicitly on his so often repeated assurances 'that he is as anxious to 'withdraw the French army as I can be to see it withdrawn, 'and that he only waits the opportunity:' and that I should have been better pleased to remain silent till he of his own accord told me that he saw that opportunity in prospect, even if not immediately at hand.

But you must make him sensible at the same time, that things are not as they were two years ago, or even this time twelvemonth, in Spain; that a sensible change has taken place since the accession of the D. del Infantado. That we have now in Mr. Lamb a source of information which we had not till this year—one, at once of credit and of authority; and you will fairly tell M. Villèle that if I were to produce Lamb's despatches to Parliament, the impression made by them would certainly be, both that the continuance of French garrisons is by no means necessary to the same, or anything like to the same degree, nor upon the same grounds, as heretofore; and that the desire of the Government of Madrid to retain them in Spain, is become at least *doubtful;* perhaps—if the Ministers had courage to speak out—is altogether changed.

It is, therefore, no longer possible for me to say, with a clear conscience, that the presence of the French troops is still required to keep the Spanish factions from cutting each other's throats; or that they are continued at the entreaties

of the Spanish Government, or that the threat of withdrawing them is employed from time to time for the salutary purpose of enforcing amnesties and pacifications.

There is nothing of all this to be said, so far as *our* intelligence goes.

For a thousand reasons, we wish to avoid—*I* personally (assure M. de Villèle) wish to avoid—any cavilling or captious discussions: but the permanence of a French army in the ports of Spain, as an occupying force, and as a military jurisdiction, this country cannot be expected to bear; and I do most earnestly wish that he would furnish me with such grounds of re-assurance for my own conviction, and such stateable reasons for others, as may put off the period when that question shall be so mooted in Parliament, as to place me under the necessity of holding any language other than that which I have hitherto held, of confidence in the intentions of the French Government.

If you get a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, I will convert this letter into a despatch. If not, it is better that no such despatch should appear upon the records of your embassy, until we have weighed well (as in that case we must proceed to do) the course which will be fit to be pursued—and the time to be chosen for entering upon it.

For the early part of the session, we shall have our hands full of our internal difficulties: but these very difficulties, though not in any degree attributable to the Government, and though particularly alien to my department, will yet certainly produce a general temper of disquietude and dissatisfaction: and may perhaps so far extend the influence of those sentiments even to me, as to render my assurances (in the face especially of what appears more or less visible to the uninstructed eye) of the necessary and innocent continuance of a French force in Spain much less satisfactory than they have been admitted to be in former sessions.

Do not lose a moment in sending off a messenger with the result of your conference with Villèle.

Persuade him, if you can, to furnish you with an outline of the King's speech, in order that ours may not *run against*

it, in anything unnecessarily. And if you can get it, let the messenger bring that in a despatch, as the apparent reason for sending him.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

My colleagues will be all in town to-morrow.

P.S.—You will probably remark (what strikes me on reading over what I have written) that I greatly *under*rate, (and which I myself shall share), if there shall appear to be a design on the part of a French Government to leave their troops in Spain, after all the pretexts on which they have hitherto remained there, are exhausted; and to keep them there as securities for the payment of debts, or as guardians of fortresses for French purposes.

This *must not be.* But I mitigate my language because I wish this to be what it professes to be, a private letter, and as such, *readable*, with only a slight breach of confidence, to Villèle. And I abhor menace till one means action.

G. C.

In the month of June some progress seems to have been made towards the attainment of Mr. Canning's object.

(*Private—Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, June 16, 1826.

I am much pleased with M. Villèle's expression of a wish to know my opinion respecting the mode of effecting the evacuation of Spain by the French troops, because I hope it implies a sincere disposition to effect that object.

The coupling this operation, with advice and exhortation to the K. of Spain on the subject of an arrangement with his late colonies, would no doubt be very wise, but to make the one dependent upon the other would be to put both into H.C.M.'s own hands.

If Villèle says we will withdraw, because you will not negotiate with America, H.C.M. may answer, I will negotiate, if you will stay.

What is to be the reply? On the one hand, what logical

connexion is there between an arrangement with America and the continuance of the French army in Spain? On the other hand, if that continuance is granted upon a condition to be performed by Spain, and if Spain sets about performing that condition, how is a new term to be fixed for the coming away of the troops? and can the occupation be suffered to be indefinite?

It seems to me that the best chance of succeeding in both objects is to be peremptory and unconditional with respect to the first. Spain will never bestir herself in any way until left to herself, or on the eve of being so; nor can France in my judgment ever use the most conclusive argument that it is in her power to employ with Spain to enforce the arrangement with her late colonies—the threat of recognition by France—while the army of France occupies the Spanish fortresses. The presence of that army is a pledge of honour that France will not do violence to Spain. The Spanish Government have maintained (and other Powers have countenanced the doctrine) that Spain had a cause of quarrel against *us*, even to the extremity of war (if she had thought fit) for *our* recognition of the colonies. The doctrine, if true, must be true with respect to France as well as England; and would not the feeling of all Europe be revolted if France were to give cause of war to Spain—the fortresses of Spain being in French occupation?

It has been proved to demonstration that the occupation gives but little influence, if any, to the French Ministry in the councils of Madrid. Is not the reason plainly this, that so long as France is entrusted with the protection of the K. of Spain's authority, it is *felt* (though it may not have been stipulated) that France *cannot* do anything to affront that authority? Yet without a positive determination so to act in some supposable case, M. Villèle himself entertains no hope of bringing Spain to reason, and preventing such a case from occurring. The troops, therefore, must be withdrawn to give his counsels a chance of success.

In my opinion, therefore, it would be prudent not to unite the two propositions, but to notify the withdrawing of the French troops as a matter of absolute necessity, on the mere

ground that such a state of things cannot by possibility be continued as a settled part of the system of Europe; and to advise, at parting, an arrangement with the colonies, as the one thing likely to tend to the settlement of Spain, offering any help, any mode, or species of intervention by which that arrangement may be furthered; but also intimating the probability that, if Spain does not make up her mind speedily, other countries (and France among them) may find it necessary for their own interests to anticipate her decisions.

With this view, I think it by no means unfortunate that Mr. Lamb has *not* found a favourable opportunity at Madrid; and I will, if M. Villèle should be disposed to act in the same sense which I have suggested, write to Lamb (or *you* may, in order to save time) to hold his hand, to leave to France the grace and the effect of the first overture—ready, however, to support it in such way as may be most useful when made.

I think, also, that it would be most advisable that the first overture by France should be general only; only not pointing to armistice alone, nor distinctly to peace and recognition, but to *an* arrangement, leaving the particular nature of it to be developed on discussion hereafter. I think this the rather, because I have reason to believe that the report which M. Villèle has heard of an indisposition in the Mexican Government to the Columbian suggestion of an armistice is true. It is only within these few days that this indisposition (or the reasons for surmising it) has come to my knowledge. M. Villèle may depend upon my doing all I can to bring Mexico and Columbia to one mind; and a favourable opportunity will shortly present itself for doing so (or, at least, for making the attempt) by the arrival of one of the Mexican Ministers in London. I have received notice of his setting out this morning. In the meantime, however, it is not desirable that Spain should become acquainted with the divergency of opinions between the two American Governments; and for that reason (as well as others) it is lucky that the proposal from Columbia has not been made.

Ever, my dear Granville,
Sincerely and affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

And, by the contents of the following letter, its attainment seems to have appeared still nearer:—

(*Private—Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, July 4, 1826.

I am very willing to admit that my objection to the putting together of the two questions of the evacuation of Spain, and an arrangement with the Spanish colonies, is obviated by M. Villèle's resolution to make the evacuation peremptory; to leave nothing contingent but the period, and to fix that period, in any case, at six months.

If that be done, I have not a word more to say on that part of the subject.

As to the mode of evacuation, I confess I have some doubts—partly political and partly military. That doubts of the latter sort should have suggested themselves to my mind may strike you as extraordinary, but when they had occurred, you will not think that I did wrong; and I hope M. Villèle will not consider it as any breach of the confidence in which we are communicating upon this matter, that I asked the opinion of the Duke of Wellington.

We both agree with M. Villèle that the threat of withdrawing the Swiss Guards is beyond all comparison more likely to have influence with H.C.M. than any other, so far as regards the attempt to bring H.C.M. to reason. But supposing it to fail of its effect, or supposing the time for evacuation come, we doubt whether it would be, either as respects the King of Spain, or as respects the French army itself, most expedient to *begin* with the removal of the Swiss Guards, leaving the garrisons of the fortresses—of Cadiz particularly—to follow.

Every principle of military prudence, the Duke of Wellington says, would prescribe the evacuation, first, of the most distant point of the French occupation, Cadiz. The garrison of that place would fall back, in the first instance, on that of Madrid; and when there, it might perhaps be indifferent what particular part of the force so combined—whether that which came from Cadiz, or that which had been stationary

at Madrid—should first cross the frontier; but the garrison of Madrid (however composed) is, militarily speaking, that portion of the French army which should be last withdrawn from the country.

Politically, the measure of withdrawing that part of the French army which surrounds the person of the King, while that which occupies the fortresses was left behind, would be much harsher in appearance than the contrary selection, or than the simultaneous withdrawing of the whole. Would the King of France himself feel no objection to a choice apparently so personal to H.C.M.?

That the garrison of Madrid should go as part of the French army is natural, and to be expected; but to select that particular part for immediate removal, contrary to obvious *military* expediency, might not only be liable to the objection which I have just stated, but, further, to the misconstruction (so indignantly repelled by M. Villèle on former occasions) of an intention to linger in the fortresses after the hitherto avowed object of protection to H.C.M.'s person had been disclaimed.

I will not disguise from M. Villèle that the evacuation of Cadiz would be that which would at once produce in *this* country the effect the most favourable to France, because, though if I were not to state that fact fairly, he must equally be aware of it, the omission to state it on my part might lead him to imagine that I attach more importance to it than I really do.

I *do* think that the effect would be important enough to render it highly desirable that in the process of evacuation, precedency should be given to Cadiz; but I think, at the same time, the other reasons for that precedency so conclusive as not to require the aid of this additional consideration.

I beg you to observe that all these suggestions refer merely to the *mode* of executing M. Villèle's purpose; that as to the purpose itself I am entirely and substantially satisfied.

As to *our* relations with Spain at this moment, I cannot better explain them to you than by enclosing extracts of two confidential letters which have lately passed between me and

Mr. Lamb. I have not yet replied to Mr. Lamb's. I wait first, the solution of the D. del Infantado's repeated promises about the Convention. Secondly, the arrival of the Mexican Commissioner in order to learn the opinion of his Government respecting armistice.

Confidential as is the character of my correspondence with Lamb, I see no reason why you should not make M. Villèle acquainted with it. He will, I am sure, appreciate the disposition, which such a communication will evince, to deal with him in the spirit of frankness and cordiality.

He is not to understand that the withdrawing of the King's Minister at Madrid, if that step should be resolved upon, would break up our channels of intercourse with the Spanish Government. A chargé d'affaires would remain; and through him I should be able to deliver the sentiments of the British Government to the D. del Infantado in a more authentic form (by notes drawn up here and sent to be presented), and with more effect perhaps than by the language of a Minister habitually conferring with the Secretary of State, and suspected perhaps sometimes of saying more than his instructions warrant.

Ever, my dear Granville,
Yours very affectionately,
GEORGE CANNING.

Notwithstanding the promises of the French Premier, the end of the year arrived without witnessing the evacuation of Spain by the French forces. Events then occurred which materially complicated matters. The chapter next but one will show how Mr. Canning dealt with them.

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. CANNING'S LETTERS ON PORTUGUESE AFFAIRS—M. HYDE DE NEUVILLE—COMTE DE SUBSERRA—BRAZIL.

THE history of Portuguese affairs, from the overthrow of the Constitution in 1822, to the dismissal of the Comte de Subserra and his Ministry, including that of the conspiracy of the Queen and Don Miguel to depose the King, together with the negotiations, which resulted in the acknowledgment by Portugal of the independence of Brazil, is given in full detail in vol. ii. chap. x. and xi. of the *Political Life*.

Extracts are to be found in these chapters from some of the private letters, here inserted, but the latter, when read *in extenso*, throw additional light on the course pursued by Mr. Canning with respect to M. Hyde de Neuville, the French ambassador at Lisbon, the Comte de Subserra, and the relations between Portugal and Brazil.

Sir William à Court, with the rank of ambassador, had replaced Sir Edward Thornton at Lisbon, about two months, when Mr. Canning thus wrote to Lord Liverpool:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Ickworth, Oct. 25, 1824.

I send you a private letter, which I have received from à Court, with the despatches, which Planta will forward to you at the same time, if he has not (as is probable) already

forwarded to you the copies of them, which may have been returned from the King.

I presume there can be no doubt about giving to à Court, in the most explicit and unqualified manner, those assurances of support which he desires; and without which his influence is not likely to be established, or maintained.

Portugal appears to be the chosen ground on which the Continental Alliance have resolved to fight England hand to hand, and we must be prepared to meet and defeat them, under every imaginable form of intrigue or intimidation, or to be driven from the field.

It is evident that no reliance can be placed on P. He seems to have put himself entirely into the hands of the Allies, and to look to France as a *corps de reserve* if we should force his Russian entrenchment.

The Brazilian *contre projet* is obviously calculated for failure. The intention, then, is to declare the negotiation broken off, and to prepare the expedition in the Tagus. We have seen enough of the correspondence between Palmella and Villa Real to *know* that this is their project; and one to which the latter (rather to my surprise) is as deeply committed as the former.

Can we suffer our squadron to remain in the Tagus, to protect (as it were) the fitting out of their expedition against Brazil?

Can we withdraw that squadron—at the risk of its being replaced by a French squadron—at all?

Can we do so, and leave the expedition to be fitted out under French and Russian protection, without marking our sense of the policy pursued by Portugal by a direct advance towards Brazil?

Can we, independently of these considerations, leave our relations with Brazil undefined much longer; the treaty being, by express stipulation, revisable, at the requisition of either party, in February next?

To all these questions I am disposed to answer, No; and they involve as weighty and difficult determination as ever Government were called upon to decide.

There are circumstances, too, which press that determination upon our consideration with an urgency not to be evaded.

The Brazilian merchants are preparing a representation to me, to ask upon what they may reckon as to the duration of the treaty? This is not an application of the sort of those from Liverpool and elsewhere, which some of our colleagues treat so cavalierly, as implying a dictation to the Government of the course of its foreign policy. No such thing. It is a directly legitimate inquiry as to an actually existing state of relations with a foreign country, resting upon an instrument, the validity or inefficacy of which is a question of serious interest to the querists.

They have a right to ask of the Government whether the treaty under which their capital is embarked, is in force or not. They may not, indeed, prescribe the policy of renewing or relinquishing, altering or maintaining; but they may reasonably require to be informed what it is that their Government have resolved to do in these particulars.

But these inquiries, to which those who make them have a right to expect an answer (though I expect them to come upon me every day) cannot be left unanswered *until* the Cabinet shall have decided upon the course to be taken towards Brazil; nor unless that course shall be to enter into some relation of a more direct nature with that Government.

It would have been difficult to keep off this decision if the treaty only had been urging it on. But Portugal itself is, with judicial blindness, adding necessity to urgency. What think you of the Portuguese consul (or political agent) at Hamburgh having called for the confiscation of certain British cargoes in that port, because they consist of *Brazil wood,* of which the Crown of Portugal has the monopoly in Brazil, and which therefore cannot have been lawfully sold to the English purchasers? This fact is not yet publicly known in London; but when it becomes so, do you think that many days will elapse before the representation of the Brazilian merchants (which is now kept back out of deference to my wishes) will be forced forward? Do we acknowledge

this right in the Crown of Portugal? On what pretence, then, do we dispute the like right in the Crown of Spain to its property in the mines of Spanish America? or do we acknowledge that too, and is all our trade in such articles avowedly contraband? and is it to be supposed that the Brazilians will acquiesce in such acknowledgments and avowals, and continue still to give us the benefit of the treaty? Impossible.

To mend the matter, one of the things which Portugal requires in the *contre projet*, is that the power of making treaties of commerce for Brazil (although separate and independent) shall still be in the King of Portugal. Will not the knowledge of this pretension stimulate the Brazilians to press forward the consideration of the existing treaty; which, be it remembered, the *Brazilian agents here have powers* to continue unaltered for a twelvemonth, from February, 1825, in order to give time for deliberate revision?

With these full powers on the one hand, and with the pretensions of Portugal, both for the present and for the future, such as I have just described them, on the other, does even the D. of W. believe that we *can* side with Portugal on this question?

As to the political part of the *contre projet*, that which relates to titles and succession, I should not despair of getting over that in the end, if it were not for, I must say, the stupidity with which Palmella has thought fit to put that part beyond the reach of discussion.

The first four articles admit of no modification. They must be accepted or rejected at once and *in toto* by the Brazilian agents here, or the negotiations must be broken off. Now it is, and Palmella must have known that it was, utterly *impossible* that the Brazilian agents should have power to acknowledge the King of Portugal *Emperor* of Brazil: *King* of Brazil, I do not say they have, but they might have power to acknowledge him. But *Emperor* is *essentially* an *elective* title. It is conferred, not assumed, sometimes by the choice of States, or of delegates; sometimes by acclamation (as in Brazil); and it is no doubt for

that reason that it was chosen. To stipulate therefore in a treaty with an Emperor so elected, that another shall be elected too, is an absolute absurdity, and can only have been adopted for the express purpose of insuring refusal.

I have not yet received Villa Real's communication, nor the letter which Sir William à Court authorizes me to expect from Palmella. The despatches only reached me to-day.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

The next letter from Sir W. à Court shows his position at Lisbon.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR SIR, Lisbon, Dec. 18, 1824.

Although I have not the least reason to believe that H.M.F. Majesty has any intention of violating his promise, nevertheless, in such a country as this, and having such people to deal with, we must be prepared for every possible contingency. You will, I trust, furnish me with the fullest instructions what to do with our ships in the event either of a refusal, or a wish to delay still further the execution of the promise.

M. de Subserra, through the agency of the police, has trumpeted forth all over the town the *overbearing insolence* of the English, in presuming to dictate to his Majesty what Ministers he is to choose. He is endeavouring to excite the feelings of national pride against us. Everything that M. de Subserra knows, has also been communicated to the foreign Ministers, and M. de Neuville has been labouring, but in vain, to engage them all in some general act—declaratory of their readiness to support the King against this interference with his royal authority. He has had two or three audiences upon the subject himself, and has put a very foolish young man (a M. Velasco, Spanish chargé d'affaires) forward in a similar manner. I cannot ascertain whether the Russian has taken any active part or not; but at all events his name has been used to the King, for his Majesty said to me very significantly, when I observed that I had reason to believe

'that the Ministers of the Holy Alliance were determined not to interfere'—'Are you quite so sure of the Russian?' I could not get his Majesty to explain himself further.

But, really, it is a little too much for these gentlemen to construe a determination to remove our ships, into a menace subversive of the independence of the country. Had we threatened war, or to bombard the town, it would have been another question; but that the declaration, that we will not remain with our ships to support an Administration named by M. de Neuville, and under the avowed influence of M. de Neuville—an Administration that, by its intrigues and duplicity, has so embarrassed the Brazilian question; that such a declaration should be considered an infringement upon the royal prerogative, and should require the interference of the other Powers of Europe, is a little too preposterous.

At this very moment, is not France declaring to the King of Spain that she will withdraw her troops from his country, if he will not consent to pay her some paltry millions of francs? In what, but in its more miserable motive, does this differ from our mode of proceeding here?

Besides, did not M. de Neuville himself interfere to force the King to re-appoint these Ministers? Has he forgotten his speech in the palace before the whole corps diplomatique? —his declaration that he would acknowledge no Minister but the Count de Subserra?—his public rebuking of M. Cypriano Freyre, upon a supposition that he was likely to be named Minister?

I hear that I am pictured by the French embassy as another Marshal Lasnes; and the young men of the embassy do not scruple to say in their private circle, that France, Spain, and Russia will make common cause to resist our interference with the affairs of this country; that if M. de Subserra can but hold his ground for a few weeks, he may bid us defiance.

A French frigate and a brig have arrived here from Cadiz; the first, under the pretext of waiting the orders of M. de Neuville, and to carry him to France.

I do not know upon what footing we stand at the Court

of the Tuileries: but I cannot help thinking that, if Lord Granville were instructed to open himself, freely and directly, to the King himself, upon the subject of Portuguese affairs, H.M.C. Majesty would easily be convinced of the absurdity of embroiling the two countries for the sole purpose of gratifying the vanity of M. de Neuville, or supporting such a character as M. de Subserra.

You have given me no sinecure here. I have not only to struggle with the French ambassador, but against all the existing authorities of the country, aided, more or less, by the greater part of my colleagues. I stand alone in a country occupied by enemies.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

WILLIAM à COURT.

P.S.—The King is a very cunning, as well as a very weak man; and I am not quite sure that he may not have excused himself to the French ambassador by the plea of necessity.

W. à C.

Right Hon. George Canning, &c. &c.

The following are extracts from a letter to Lord Granville, dated Christ Church, January 17, 1825.

Does not this date remind you of very old times? I have been passing five quiet days here on my way from Bath to town; and for two of them Liverpool has been here too. I am at Pett's canonical house; he at Bishop Legge's, All Souls' Palace.

You will see in all the newspapers the account of our doings at Bristol. The Ultras will no doubt lay to my charge the having seduced Liverpool into popular courses. But I had no hand in it. The Mayor and Common Council at Bristol would take no denial. It was Liverpool rather than me that they wanted. I am a sort of heretic in the eyes of the Bristolians. First, as the champion of their rival town, and secondly, on account of the Catholic question. They received me very well, however; but I took great care to put Liverpool forward in everything, and to keep myself back

as much as possible. Whatever the *Times* may pretend, there was no direct allusion to South America, and, upon the whole, the day went off harmlessly for effect in the quarter where such *symposia* are most held in abhorrence. It is incalculable what an impediment and perplexity *our* strict union (Liverpool's and mine) upon the great subjects of foreign policy, is to the sighers after the Continental School.

The Emperor of Russia seems to be in a passion If he recalcitrates thus upon the Greek Conference alone, what will he say and do when he receives Pozzo's account of the Spanish American treaties? Will he publish a manifesto? For the present he contents himself with directing Count Lieven to read to me a despatch the amount of which seems to be that 'he will be d—d if ever he talks Greek to us again.' Your long despatch of Thursday upon that subject is interesting.

* * * *

I was about to write to you to-day a thundering despatch upon Portugal, on learning that Villèle had sent orders to Hyde de Neuville to remain at his post at Lisbon, after having solemnly engaged to recall him. But just as I was about to put my angry pen in motion came a despatch from à Court, informing me that Hyde de Neuville, after waiting several weeks for those orders which, it appears, he had been encouraged to expect, and which actually left Paris *viâ* Madrid, on Monday last, had at length embarked in the frigate sent for his conveyance, and was well on his way to Brest before the courier that was to have detained him had begun his journey. 'The French ambassador sailed yesterday evening,' says à Court, in a private letter dated January 3rd. 'Relieved from his brawling opposition, I hope that 'everything will now go on smoothly, and that I shall be able 'to make some satisfactory communication by the next or 'following packet.' In this state of things I see no advantage in letting M. de Villèle know, that I know of his meditated roguery. By the time that Hyde de Neuville reaches Brest, and the courier Lisbon, the blow will probably have been struck which is to bring back Portugal within the legitimate influence of her old ally. I say *probably;* for

we have to do with a weakness and vacillation beyond all belief: à Court has done admirably in most difficult circumstances, and even in case of failure I will do him justice at all times.

Within a fortnight after M. de Neuville's departure the 'blow was struck,' and the Administration of the Count de Subserra dismissed by his Most Faithful Majesty.

In the same letter which contains the above extracts, Mr. Canning says:—

My despatches of to-day will have given you ample information as to Sir Charles Stuart's mission.

With this Villèle has no pretensions to find fault, for it is a regular mediation asked by both parties to the quarrel; and one into which we not only willingly admit Austria, but court* her accession. Nothing ever was more 'European.' But he will not like it the better for that, I fear. Only let him have nothing to complain of in point of reserve. Go beforehand with him in all possible explanations.

I do not mean that you are to read to him the despatches to Chamberlain,† or to tell him their contents; but as to the fact of Stuart's going, and that he goes to finish the negotiations between Portugal and Brazil, tell him before he has time to ask a question.

The two following letters relate to M. Hyde de Neuville.

(*Private and Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Jan. 21, 1825.

In addition to the several communications which I enable you, by my despatches of to-day, to make to M. Damas and M. Villèle, in proof of the confidence which M. Villèle requires, and in supply of the aid which he asks against his opposition, I enclose in this letter another to which M.

* The Empress of Brazil was an Austrian Princess.

† British Chargé d'Affaires at Rio de Janeiro.

Villèle will not be insensible; and which, for the present, may be confined to him only.

Polignac is full of jealousy about Portugal, which is excessively foolish; because Portugal has been, and always *must* be English, so long as Europe and the world remain in anything like their present state.

Portugal once French would soon be part of the Spanish monarchy. But of all follies, the greatest is to suppose that we stick to Portugal for the sake of our trade. On the contrary, the treaties with Portugal (including even the odious and impolitic one of 1810, which I, then Secretary of State, in vain remonstrated against with the *then* Board of Trade, as grinding and vexatious to Portugal and Brazil) are clogs upon us, in our new course of extended and liberal commercial principles.

This, however, the French and Portuguese are too cunning to believe. I am assured, too, that Villèle is infected with the same incredulity.

M. Hyde de Neuville was, therefore, instructed to urge the making Lisbon *a free port;* and such importance was attached to this grand device for ruining our commercial ascendency, that he was specially ordered not to leave Lisbon until, in spite of the supposed resistance of the English ambassador, he had seen the favourite scheme definitively settled. Well, what do we do to ward off this blow? Why, we write to à Court to treat the projected alteration as matter of the most perfect indifference. The effect of which treatment of it is, as à Court informs me, to relax the general ardour in its favour, and to set its partisans a squabbling with each other.

This pretext for Hyde de Neuville's prolonged stay at Lisbon being done away, I confess I was vexed (and so you may tell Villèle) that he should still have been ordered to continue a residence, every hour of which has been at the hazard of a quarrel between the two countries. He *must* know what a man Hyde de Neuville is—proud, violent, ill-judging, coarse, overbearing, of very limited capacity, and with a most overweening sense of such sense as he thinks he has; and bent on pushing the principles of legitimacy and in-

tolerance to a pitch which scarcely his own fanatical party in France venture to avow. Such a man, fretting and agitating himself, and all around him, within the limits of a very small community, is an absolute pest to society, and prevents the heavings of the late storm from settling down with tranquillity. But we have a still more serious ground of remonstrance; Hyde de Neuville (we have it under Polignac's hand) did take upon himself to call the French garrison of Badajoz into Portugal. The commandant, as it luckily happened, had too much prudence to obey the call. But had he been of Hyde de Neuville's sort, a message to Parliament and an instantaneous sending of troops to the Tagus would have been the consequence of this madman's unauthorized exercise of (what I suppose he calls) his discretion. When this fact was avowed, we were told, at the same time, that Hyde de Neuville had been reprimanded, and that he was *coming home* without delay. I do not affirm that it was said in so many words that *he was recalled;* but such was the implication, and in the faith of this assurance we gave up the idea of sending troops to Portugal. Since then, M. de Neuville has lingered at Lisbon near five months; and even now that a frigate has been sent to bring him away, a counter order has been despatched to him by land, not to embark for France. True he had embarked and sailed before the order reached Lisbon; but the *animus* in sending it was the same, and it was really a most rash and ill-advised retraction of a recall which the gravest considerations rendered advisable. I trust he is not to be sent back again.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private and Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Jan. 26, 1825.

Lieven's object was to read to me a despatch from his Court, very dry and very angry, and taking leave of us upon the Greek question. I will send you a copy of it next post.

Esterhazy was with me three mortal hours yesterday, reading to me an accumulation of despatches (two or three '*expéditions*'), which have arrived during my absence, upon

this same question; and finally offering to mediate a reconciliation between me and Lieven on behalf of our respective Courts. I took both Lieven's communication and Esterhazy's offers very coolly, observing that the Emperor was master to do as he pleased; and that, *pour le reste*, this was an ebullition which would probably pass away, and that we should find ourselves in the same route again before long.

The Russian despatch is evidently written at *me;* and I should not be surprised if it were a part of the effort which was to be made simultaneously, and has been made but piecemeal, to produce change in the Government. It *has* produced the recognition of Spanish America instead. How will Russia take that result of her manœuvres? We shall hardly know before the meeting.

How Spain takes the recognition we shall know in a few days. I had a despatch from Bosanquet last night by post, written at the moment when he was going to the audience with M. Zea, in which he was to make the communication. He kept the messenger to despatch with the result. I expect hourly an arrival from Portugal, which will probably decide whether our influence there is triumphant or extinguished.* Nothing could equal Polignac's astonishment and rage at hearing that Hyde de Neuville, whom he thought fixed anew on the banks of the Tagus, was happily landed at Brest. I learnt this from Esterhazy, who had the amusement of stating the fact to Polignac in return for the *lecture* to him by Polignac of a long despatch from his Court, setting forth the necessity of keeping Hyde de Neuville at Lisbon.

The enclosed copy of a letter of mine to Villa Real completes all that I have to say of Portugal.

There is nothing else of moment now pending abroad; and our thoughts are necessarily at this time turned inwards.

We have our first Cabinet dinner to-day, and our first speech Cabinet to-morrow.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

---

* Referring to the dismissal of M. de Subserra.

A new Spanish Minister, in the person of M. de Los Rios, having been accredited to his Majesty, it appears that Mr. Canning took a liking to him.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Feb. 11, 1825.

I cannot keep my word with you to-day. The debate (which was wearisome) was adjourned at two o'clock, to be resumed at five this afternoon. I was not in bed till three. I have all the business of the day to do between my rising and two o'clock, when there is a Cabinet, which will probably last till it is time to eat my mutton-chop preparatory to the House. Judge if I can do more than enclose to you poor dear little Los Rios's first epistle (in answer to a very kind one from me, you may suppose), which is quite a love-letter, and shows that if, like Balaam, he came to *curse*, he has like him turned curses into benedictions.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

(*Private—Political.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Gloucester Lodge, Feb. 8, 1825.

Your mail, due Sunday, has only arrived this morning.

Luckily, it does not bring much to be answered. Nor have I much on hand to say to you, after the copious communications of last week: much, I mean, of a private nature.

Of a *private political* kind, I enclose to you two not unimportant matters. One, a letter from Zea Bermudez delivered to me by Los Rios, with a copy of my answer to it.

The other, Sir William à Court's account of the late ministerial revolution at Lisbon. Palmella may thank himself for being involved in Subserra's fall. We did all that we could to extricate him from that community of fortunes, but he would not.

If he repairs to Paris, you will be a gainer; for he is very

agreeable. I suppose he would not come to London again for fear of H.'s and A.'s. But I have some misgiving that he will creep in again at home.

Will Subserra come here? By the way, your Ultra colleagues will, I suppose, cry out against the supposed exertion of our influence in turning out Subserra.

The defence is as follows:—

First.—That Subserra himself, when saved by the British Minister from the apprehended fury of the people on the 30th of April, before he recovered his fright, sent a message to me (by a person of the name of Sarmento—and he, Subserra, has since avowed his agent) to inquire if we would receive him here as ambassador?

We answered yes, notwithstanding all that had passed, and notwithstanding his known enmity to England and devotion to France. And never till after this message did I *here*, or did Thornton, or à Court at Lisbon, utter one word about a change. But this overture of Subserra's gave a fair opening to state what we thought of the expediency of such a change.

Second.—It is not to be forgotten that Subserra let Masséna's army into Portugal; that he was proscribed—banished—condemned to death as a traitor, and that it is not his fault that his King was not dethroned, and the British army driven, as Buonaparte intended that Masséna should drive it, into the sea.

Third.—That our Fleet in the Tagus was affording a *moral* support to this man's Administration. And the only threat that we employed was, that we would withdraw it rather than continue to support *him*. Had we not a right to say so?

These hints will enable you to fight little spit-fire W. to advantage.

I have no doubt that he and all ultrageous diplomats are in a fury.

Not so dear little Los Rios—the nicest little Minister that ever was seen. I have taken prodigiously to him, and hope he has to me.

He asks my advice for the Government of Spain, and I mean, from time to time, to give it him.

I dined him, with the whole corps diplomatique, on Sunday; and with him his small friend Transtamara—of whose name I see the *Courier* makes sad work.

Sir C. S. and F. L. got Los Rios near them at dinner, and there were not wanting apprehensions among my staff, that the poor little man was carried off between them (S. and F. L.) to close the evening in less edifying society.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

P.S.—The Lisbon despatches go in a long paper separate.

From the period of the dismissal of the Subserra Ministry, the diplomatic intercourse between England and Portugal ran smoothly, under the extremely able management of Sir William à Court.

Mr. Canning succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation between Portugal and Brazil, through the agency of Sir Charles Stuart, who was sent on a special mission for the purpose. It is well known that Sir Charles and Mr. Canning did not pull well together in this affair; but all private letters, which refer to their differences of opinion are, for obvious reasons, omitted.

Mr. Canning bitterly complained of the treachery of one continental Government to whom the instructions to Sir Charles were communicated. He thus expresses himself to Lord Granville:—

My dear Granville, Wortley Hall, Sept. 11, 1825.

In a despatch which I address to you to-day you will see another instance of ——'s duplicity and treachery, which is more flagrant than former acts of the same character, because it grows out of an excess of confidence on our part. The

Emperor of Brazil has behaved unexpectedly well in this case.

I suspect that this is not the only advantage taken by ——, of the communication of my instructions to Sir C. Stuart.

At all events I mean to avail myself of the abuse of confidence in Brazil to protest anew against the stupid system of confiding everything to everybody, because, forsooth, all the ladies and gentlemen are our allies. I cannot undertake to carry on the foreign affairs of England (to which surely some reference ought to be had) on such a condition.

Who confides anything to us in return? Not France, certainly.

When next Damas asks you about Lord Cochrane, ask him about his missions to Egypt and to Greece.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

While Sir Charles Stuart was at Rio de Janeiro, the old King of Portugal died, and the Emperor of Brazil became King of Portugal. In this capacity, he *octroyéd* a constitutional Charter for that country; he then abdicated the Portuguese crown, in favour of his daughter Donna Maria, at that time a child, and appointed a Regency to conduct the Government during her minority.

This grant of a Constitution, and its acceptance and establishment by the Portuguese, gave rise, towards the close of the following year, 1826, to attempts being made to subvert it. The history of those attempts need not be detailed here, but the private letters, which are contained in the next chapter, are interesting.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. CANNING'S VISIT TO LORD GRANVILLE AT PARIS—LETTERS RESPECTING THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND THE LORD CHANCELLOR—SPANISH ATTACK ON PORTUGAL.

IN the autumn of 1826, Mr. Canning (as has been before mentioned) passed a month at Paris with his friend Lord Granville, the Ambassador. He was received, by all parties, with every attention and respect; and Charles X., who was accustomed at the Tuileries to dine alone in almost solitary grandeur, with none save members of the Royal Family, made a breach in the rigid etiquette which surrounded him, by inviting to his table the celebrated Foreign Minister of England. This mark of distinction his Majesty had only twice before accorded to individuals unconnected with the families of the reigning European potentates. The one was a British subject, the Duke of Wellington, the other was an Austrian, Prince Metternich. Mr. Canning was the only untitled person to whom this honour was ever accorded. The dinner took place, after the manner of the Kings of France, in one of the vast saloons of the Tuileries, with the public indiscriminately admitted. In the following letter to Lord Liverpool, Mr. Canning gives some account of his Paris visit.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Paris, Sept. 29, 1826.

I take for granted that Planta sent you a copy, taken by

Stapleton, of my letter to the King; but lest he should have failed to do so, I enclose one, which you will be so good as to return to me by the same messenger who takes it to you. This messenger is *not* going on to London, but will return with the bag by the packet on Wednesday morning.

I had yesterday my first talk of nearly three hours with Villèle. Hitherto we had only met at great dinners, and I resolved to wait till he should propose a private interview; as I feared that any appearance of eagerness on my part would conspire, with the twittings of the two Oppositions, to make him apprehensive of the inferences which might be drawn from our meeting in private.

However, the proposition was made by him after his own great dinner on Monday last; and I was with him yesterday by ten o'clock in the morning.

* * * *

I am to see him again at the same time to-morrow, when I intend to lead the conversation to the affairs of the Peninsula.

* * * *

The enclosed papers prove satisfactorily that we need not go to war for Persia, nor pay her the 200,000 tomauns. But was there ever such a treaty? . . . . I expect messengers every hour from Vienna, Constantinople, Madrid, and Lisbon, and Pozzo expects one from Moscow by the end of the week.

The fire at Constantinople is said to have been still raging on the 2nd. Stratford's last despatch is of the 31st ult., on which day the fire had broken out.

We are going to-night to a private play at St. Cloud, the first act of gaiety which Charles X. has committed there. It is in honour, not of Michaelmas Day, but of the birthday of the Duc de Bordeaux.

To-morrow the American Minister gives me a great dinner, at which I expect to meet Gallatin, who is coming here for a frisk of three weeks.

Sunday we are quiet.

But Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday in next week, are full. After which I hope to have done with those

convivialities, at least till Pozzo's dining-room is ready, which he is preparing with the utmost activity.

I hope the little Jesuit arrived safe. I sat next his patron the Bishop of Hermopolis (Ministre des Cultes), the other day at dinner, and contrived to get him near me on purpose. He is a worthy old man—not a Jesuit, I think, nor a lover of Jesuits himself, but deeply impressed with the importance of bringing some religion back into France, and thinking Jesuits the best instruments for effecting that object.

I was much amused with one part of his conversation respecting the slave-trade. I wanted to persuade him to suggest to the Pope to issue a bull to put it down. He listened to me with great willingness, on the ground that such a bull might do great good to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; but so little feeling had he in the matter of *slave-trade itself*, that when, after describing its anti-Christian character, and all its horrors in practice (most eloquently, as I flattered myself), I ended with saying, 'and it is now with 'Catholic countries only that the shame and criminality of 'this monstrous traffic rests,' my convert (as I hoped to find him) answered with the greatest mildness and simplicity, '*Apparemment, ils en ont plus de besoin;*' thus clearly indicating that he believed the whole question of abolition to be one of mere policy on our part, and that our anxiety to see other nations follow our example arose (in his opinion) only from our being able to do without the slave-trade, while other nations could not afford to give it up.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

Mr. Canning felt strongly on this subject.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Jan. 17, 1826.

I have no despatches to send to you to-day—at least, I do not recollect anything that requires one, and Planta, who is my index, is ill in bed.

It occurs to me, however, that I never answered half

enough the impudent request of the Pope for protection of his subjects against the *Barbaresques*.

I answer it thus, and, some day I will do so officially.

Why does not the Pope prohibit the African slave-trade? It is carried on wholly by Roman Catholic Powers, and by those among them who acknowledge most subserviently the power and authority of the Court of Rome.

Why, I say, does not he issue a bull against it? and so aid our negotiations for its abolition with Portugal, and Brazil?

Is it not an anti-Christian traffic? are not the Courts of Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro Courts in which the Pope has, or can have, what influence he pleases? If so, with what face does his Holiness propose to us to interfere with the Government of Algiers and Tripoli to save the few Italians whom they take, occasionally, for their necessary household occupations, while the Portuguese and Brazilians are taking annually thousands and thousands of the Southern Africans for the exhausting labours of the field and of the mine? Tell my friend Macchi that so long as any Power whom the Pope can control, and does not, sends a slave-ship to Southern Africa, I have not the audacity to propose to Northern Africa to abstain from cruising for Roman domestics. Indeed I think them justified in doing so.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

During this visit at Paris, the symptoms of an intention on the part of the Spanish Government to attempt the overthrow of the Government of Portugal, which was now founded on Don Pedro's Charter, began to manifest themselves. The following three letters to Lord Liverpool explain the progress of events.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Paris, Oct. 2, 1826.

The accompanying despatches from Lamb will show you

that matters between Spain and Portugal are just approaching to a crisis, unless the madness of Spain can be checked by timely interposition. After all Villèle's professions, we should have a good right to be surprised at the smallness of the help, or rather at the direct opposition, which Lamb finds in the French ambassador, if it were not notorious that De Moustier considers himself at Madrid as the organ, not of his Government, but of his party—the High Ultra party in France, who are for pushing on a war between Portugal and Spain. Their motives for this policy are, in the first place, probably, hatred of England; but in the second, a desire to rivet the retention of Spain, of which they know Villèle to be anxious to get rid, and to renew and cement a Bourbon alliance on principles hostile to a free constitution.

The despatch from à Court will show you that the Portuguese Government is behaving exemplarily. The one false step of the proclamation* of the 1st of August, was not to be excused, and it has had serious practical ill consequences. But I hope you will think with me that they have been sufficiently rebuked for that error, and that they have done all in their power to repair it. After having scolded them for six weeks, it becomes necessary now to consider whether it may not be time to pat them on the head again; and to let them see that the scolding was intended really in friendship, and for their good, and not to pick a quarrel and shake them off, which in good faith and honour we cannot do. While we have been pretty severely correcting Portugal, we have not been wanting in forbearance and delicacy to Spain. The time is surely come when we must consider whether it is not due to both parties (for Spain is hurrying to her ruin) to stop her at the point, beyond which she cannot advance but to hostilities. In all that relates to Villa Real's mission, and to the restoration of arms, &c., Spain is clearly, unequivocally in the wrong; and her mere holding out on these points tends to produce in Portugal almost the same dangers as an actual declaration of

---

Claiming a right to the Regency for the Infanta during the Queen's minority.—*Vide Political Life*, vol. iii. p. 204.

war. So strong is this tendency, that I know no way by which Portugal can escape those evils so probably, as by declaring war, which God forbid she should do, but which she has a clear right to do on the violation of treaties, by the refusal to restore her deserters; or, to restore even the arms and accoutrements, with which Portugal would be contented. Already there is growing up in Lisbon an opinion that the Portuguese Government have submitted too tamely to the insults and injuries of Spain. Our advice and exhortations have mainly contributed to this submission, and we are surely bound to protect her against the consequences of it.

There is no time to be lost, for the Portuguese Chambers are to meet before the end of this month. Spain must be brought by any means to receive Villa Real, and to restore the arms. My notion is, to send back the messenger to Lamb, with orders to insist upon both those points; and, if they are not granted, to come away. I believe this threat will succeed. If it does not, I will direct Lamb so to manage his coming away as not to preclude his return, if hereafter advisable (which my own opinion is, that it *will not be)*: but if I defer taking advantage of my advanced position here till I can receive your answer to this letter, I may entirely miss the opportunity of trying the effect of the measure which I propose, before Spain shall have been committed by some act of desperation with Portugal.

Pozzo (who is atoning for his past sins by acting cordially with us) is strongly impressed with the necessity of an immediate step, and thinks *that*, which I meditate is likely to accomplish this object. Lamb has always thought it our best, if not our only chance, of carrying any point which we felt it essential to carry. I will see Villèle before I send off the messenger. I verily believe that if anything can induce him to *force* De Moustier into a right course, or to recall him, it will be the apprehension of Lamb's coming away.

I send this by the ordinary messenger, but with orders to carry it himself to Walmer. I will send an extra messenger (whom I have here) with my drafts, which are not yet written, to-morrow.

The despatches from the Peninsula arrived only last night. Pleasant holidays these! But it is lucky that I am here.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Paris, Oct. 5, 1826.

I avail myself of the return of another of my younkers from his holidays to send you my drafts to Lamb and à Court, which went off the night before last; and drafts to Sir H. Wellesley, which are going off this morning.

There is so much reading in them that you would not thank me for the addition of a long private letter. I have, indeed, little to say more than they contain on the subjects to which they relate; and my time, since I wrote to you last, has been wholly taken up by them, and with the conferences with Villèle and Pozzo, which preceded them, with the occasional relief of huge dinners of forty covers on each successive day, which agree very ill with the hard work of the morning.

The last of the series of festivities takes place at the Spanish ambassador's to-day.

It is very lucky that I was here to receive Lamb's and à Court's despatches. The additional ten days which would have been occupied by their transmission to England, and the sending of instructions to Granville, would have lost the opportunity of doing anything in time for the opening of the Chambers at Lisbon; not to mention that no instructions, however well executed, could have had the same effect as my immediate communication with Villèle.

It is but justice to him to say that he entered cordially into the question. He went very near to assure me that De Moustier should be recalled, if he played tricks again, and failed to execute his instructions. Those instructions were prepared and sent to me to be forwarded by my messenger, within three or four hours after I left Villèle; and Damas, whom I met in the evening at dinner, assured me

that the purport of them was to tell the King of Spain that he was not to look for any countenance from France, if he persisted in refusing to do justice to Portugal in a case in which Spain was so flagrantly in the wrong. H.M.C.M., Damas said, 'washed his hands of the consequences of that refusal.'

Pozzo has written as strongly as possible to D'Oubril, with what effect I am more doubtful. The general persuasion is, that Spain will give way. If so, I hope the crisis at Lisbon is avoided for the present; although another is at hand, if Don Miguel refuses to take the oath. If Lamb comes away, he will come *here;* so that I can send him back again, if, upon consideration, it shall be thought advisable to do so. But I confess, once away, *I* should *not* think it advisable to do so.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

P.S.—I enclose a private letter from à Court* which will show you how critical is the state of things in Portugal, and how short a time is left to us to provide against an explosion at the meeting of the Chambers. That meeting is fixed for the 19th.

My messenger will reach Madrid on the 9th. Supposing Lamb to get through his business in two days (which would be rapid), he will be able to despatch him on the night of the 11th, or the morning of the 12th.

The messenger (who is an excellent one) undertakes to perform the journey from Madrid to Lisbon, in three and a-half, or four days. I doubt it. But allowing him four or five, he will be there on the 16th or 17th, just eight-and-forty hours, perhaps, before the opening of the Chambers. You see, I had no time to lose.

I add also copies of two private letters† to Sir H. Wellesley, which pray forward (with Sir W. à Court's letter) to Planta.

G. C.

---

* Dated Lisbon, Sept. 5, 1826. † Dated Paris, Oct. 5, 1826.

P.P.S.—The bearer of this is Mellish, son of Mellish, who was at Eton with Frere, and Bobus, and me, and whom I made consul at Hamburgh fifteen or sixteen years ago. He died there, and left a large family, by a German wife of high blood, and small fortune, of which this youth is the eldest. He is clever and well educated. He came to me from Cambridge with a good reputation. Keep him, or send him on, and keep the despatches to follow by the post, as you like best.

G. C.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Paris, Oct. 6, 1826.

I had not sent off my letter to you yesterday many hours, when another messenger arrived from Lamb with the despatches herewith transmitted to you.

They are perplexing and alarming. The conduct of De Moustier is atrocious; and unless my instructions to Lamb of the 3rd inst. settle the question of the restitution of arms, &c., I really fear that the influence of this man, or his —— (for his private objects are at the bottom of his subserviency to the King of Spain) acting upon the weakness of the Spanish Government, and upon the irritated and alarmed feelings of Portugal, may kindle a war between the two nations of the Peninsula, before we meet. The French Ministers, however, and Pozzo, are confident of the success of Lamb's demand, backed by the order to him to come away upon the refusal of it; and even Damas now argues that without that peremptory sanction, the demand would have had little chance of success. Damas read to me, this morning, the draft of the despatch which he sent to De Moustier by my messenger. It could not be better. It is short, precise, and positive. It directs De Moustier to support Lamb's demand, with the utmost energy; and to signify explicitly to the Spanish Minister that the King of France will not hold himself in any degree answerable for the '*conséquences funestes*,' which may accrue to Spain from a denial of justice to Portugal. I have also had a long talk with Villèle, to whom (as well as to Damas) I read (or rather trans-

lated) Lamb's despatch. Villèle was to see the King immediately after, and I shall defer sending back the messenger to Lamb till to-morrow, in the hope of hearing something as to the, at least, conditional recall of De Moustier.

But the difficulty, I fear, is with the King. Damas seems to dislike, and Villèle to despise De Moustier, heartily. Is it not strange that they should have left him in such a post so long?

Nothing yet from Vienna. Prince Metternich is deeply responsible for all the dangers which his dilatory policy in respect to the Infanta has created.

If Lamb should have failed, there is an end of the matter; and in that case I really apprehend that we must expect, ere long, a direct call from Portugal for the execution of our treaties of defensive alliance. It will be a great consolation in that case that Portugal has acted with so much moderation and forbearance.

I verily think that, with all his partiality for Spain, and all his dread of liberal institutions, the D. of W. will not be able to deny that, in this quarrel, Spain, and Spain only, is in the wrong.

The refusal, hitherto steadily persevered in, to receive Spanish deserters into Portugal, is an instance of good faith and of obedience to our advice, which, in the face of such provocations, must be allowed to put the Portuguese Government in the right, beyond what could have been expected of any Government, old or new, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty.

I almost doubt whether we can justify it to ourselves to continue to forbid their resort to so obvious a measure of self-defence, and fair reprisal.

The increased pressure of the crisis tells, I think, upon the question which I propounded to you from à Court, on the last occasion but one, touching Lord Beresford. Ought he not to go, and to go speedily?

I will send my last drafts to you by Monday's courier. The messenger who carries this will go over to Walmer, and

return with the mails as before. Be so good as to send the despatches on to Planta by post.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

I received your letter of the 3rd, last night. My intention is to leave this place on Monday, the 23rd, and to be at Walmer on the 25th to dinner.

On the 16th of October, Mr. Canning writes to Lord Liverpool:—

We have nothing yet from Vienna. The delay is very perplexing, and it is very unfair. I have anticipated your views of a war of parties in Portugal, and have told à Court that we can have nothing to do with it if it should unhappily arise.

On the same day that the above sentences were written, the following letter was despatched, which indicates that there was little cordiality between Mr. Canning and the Duke of Wellington. It accounts for the separation between them which took place six months later, when the former was commanded by the King to construct an Administration.

(*Most Secret.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Paris, Oct. 16, 1826.

I can have no objection to Lord Beresford's seeing the correspondence with à Court up to the present period, for the purpose of making up his mind as to the acceptance or refusal of the command; provided this inspection does not lead to the pretension of seeing the correspondence in future, when Lord Beresford shall be established at Lisbon.

You may think this proviso over-scrupulous; but it is not so. I do not understand the D. of W.'s letter. 'Admitted'—by whom? that the Infant Don Miguel has a right to the Regency in 1827. The *pros* and *cons* of that construction are, as you say, fully argued in one of my drafts to à Court (but

one which I think in point of time could hardly have reached the D. of W. when he wrote), but I am quite sure that there was no 'admission' of mine before that, in the sense which he assumes. For up to that time my opinion against Don Miguel's right had been stronger than, upon beating the question out in argument, I thought could be maintained. Even in the *last* despatch, the inference is the converse of that which the D. of W. has discovered; for instead of concluding that *Don M. has* the right, unless the Emperor excludes him specially, I conclude that the Infanta must continue in possession, unless the Emperor specially directs the change. Besides it is contended (and I think unanswerably), that Don M. *has no right at all* under the Constitution, until he swears to it, which he has not done. Whether à Court's despatch, containing an account of the going off of the garrison of Almeira had reached London at the time when the D. of W.'s letter was written, I doubt—I incline to think not. I knew it *here* at least a week sooner by *telegraph*, than by à Court, and the D. of W. must very well know that all the newspaper intelligence, of which he complains, is derived from the Paris papers, which derive theirs from the telegraphic despatches, which are regular and certain, while those by sea are sometimes twice as long on their passage. Yesterday, for instance, the French Government had by the telegraph intelligence from Lisbon to the 8th instant (seven days!) Probably the substance of it will be in the *Etoile* of to-night (perhaps it was in last night's), and will then be transplanted into our evening papers of Wednesday. Sir W. à Court's despatches of the 4th may not be in London before the 24th or 26th. The D. of W. will of course complain that they are anticipated by the newspapers; but I humbly answer, I cannot help it, until he can contrive to give me the command of winds and waves, or to put down the French telegraph. The intelligence is disagreeable. *Very bad* elections, and in the ultra-liberal sense so much so, that one of the Ministers (it is believed Almeida) has not been able to find a seat!

This is very untoward; but we are to thank Vienna and Madrid for it.

To return, however, to the D. of W.'s letter. I really do not understand what he would have. Is he contented that the despatches should go to him next in order, after the King, and yourself? They are ordered so to do; but then you let the F. O. know where you are—they can therefore judge when they are likely to have the despatches again. There is no such calculation to be made of the D. of W.'s movements; and, so far from the despatch being always returned to a day——But there is no use in discussing those bye questions, there is something else—though I protest I know not exactly what—at the bottom of the D. of W.'s present temper. His extraordinary fretfulness upon this matter, his repeated reference, and those of his *alentours*, to the approach of critical times, and other language which I know both he and the Chancellor have held very lately about the state of the Government, satisfy me that there is a looking forward to some convulsion in the Government, not wholly unmixed perhaps with some intention of bringing it on. Be it so. I confess I have no idea how the Government will be to be carried on in the House of Commons, in the sense in which it has been carried on for the last three years, with the whole patronage of the law, the greater part of the church, and all the army in the Chancellor's and the D. of W.'s hands.

I am aware, too, that the D. of W. is very angry at my coming here. Two years ago he interfered with the King to prevent my doing so. But I suppose he felt that after he had himself been here in the interval, and after Westmorland had been preaching here for two months his ultra and philo-Turkish principles, I was not likely to be again so easily turned from my purpose. I am right glad that I came, not only for the immediate and unforeseen advantage of my presence here during the discussion with Spain, but because I have been able to assure myself, to absolute conviction, that had the Government been rightly understood here in 1822-3, the invasion of Spain would never have taken place. In this faith I shall die.

I have wandered so far into the topics and feelings suggested by the tone of this and former letters of the D. of W.,

that I will reserve what I have to say of political matters for another letter.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

Mr. Canning naturally felt sensitive at receiving no assistance from his military and legal colleagues in the distribution of their large patronage: a month after he had disburdened his mind to Lord Liverpool, he thus wrote in a similar strain directly to Lord Eldon.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR LORD, Foreign Office, Dec. 15, 1826.

In answer to the enclosed letters from Mr. Martin of Galway, I stated to him that I was not in the habit of obtruding requests upon your lordship; that in the course of five-and-twenty years, or thereabouts, I had made but four applications to your lordship, with one of which (an application for a Commissionership of Bankrupts for the son of a Liverpool constituent) your lordship had had the goodness to comply.

That under these circumstances, I could ask nothing from your lordship as from myself, for Mr. Martin's friend, but that if Mr. Martin desired me to transmit his letter to your lordship, I would do so.

Mr. Martin, contrary (certainly) to my wish or expectation, does desire me so to transmit his letter; and I, therefore, take the liberty of doing so.

My situation in the House of Commons exposes me to such requests, and does not allow of my always evading them, though, as the experiment is being tried in my person, with how little of the patronage of Government the King's business in that House can be carried on, I evade such requests as much as I can.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,
My dear Lord, your Lordship's
Most obedient, humble Servant,
GEORGE CANNING.

The above letter was written in a state of considerable irritation at Mr. Martin's untoward acceptance of an offer, of which it was evidently hoped that he would not have availed himself. Mr. Canning placed it in my hands to copy, and forward 'immediately.' It seemed, however, in the ticklish state in which one party of the Cabinet was towards the other, that, however just and reasonable the complaint, yet, unless it were intended (which I knew that it was not) to produce a crisis, it would be unwise to send a letter, written under the influence of angry feelings: so I ventured to keep it back. A few hours afterwards I said to him: 'I have not sent your letter to old Eldon.' 'Not sent it,' he angrily inquired; 'and pray, why not?' I replied, 'Because 'I am quite sure that you ought to read it over again 'before you send it.' 'What do you mean?' he sharply replied. 'Go and get it.' I did as I was bid; he read it over, and then I saw the smile of good humour come over his countenance. 'Well,' he said, 'you are a good boy. You are quite right, don't send it. I will write another.'

These were the sort of things which created such a warm feeling of attachment towards him in those by whom he was surrounded.

On the 20th of October, the following letter announces to Lord Liverpool that Don Miguel had taken the oath of fidelity to the new Portuguese Constitution.

(*Private.*)

My dear Liverpool, Paris, Oct. 20, 1826.

I return your Beresford papers, observing only that you mark one of them No. 4; whereas I cannot find No. 3,

which I suppose was a second memorandum, and must have *dropped* through: or, is the red ink in the margin of No. 2 the second memorandum?

As you will see by the despatches which I send you that D. Miguel has taken the oath, one difficulty is out of the way. As to getting him to Brazil, that is out of the question; and I confess I begin to have my doubts whether it is not as well that Don Pedro, who is perfectly capable of playing false, should not have D. M. in his hands.

The sooner Beresford is off the better. I have no fear of his not remaining.

The peerage as a *reward* is quite a different thing from the peerage as a stipulation.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—I have found No. 3. It had 'dropped through,' indeed—but *here*. This comes of writing on slippery plaister paper.

G. C.

On returning from Paris, before Mr. Canning had quitted the French soil, at Airaines, he writes as follows:—

(*Confidential.*)

Airaines, Friday, Oct. 27, 1826,
Quarter-past Eight, A.M.

MY DEAR GRANVILLE,

A messenger met me last night upon the road, with despatches from Sir W. à Court, of which I hasten to communicate the contents to you. I cannot forward the despatches themselves, because I must keep them to talk over with Lord Liverpool to-morrow.

They are of the most fearful importance. The war between Spain and Portugal, or rather by Spain against Portugal, is actually begun.

To state things in their order—first, as to the deserters, for the settlement of whose case we have advised, and Portugal has adopted so reasonable a compromise, the conduct of Spain is absolutely outrageous.

1. She insists upon treating with Portugal as an unacknowledged Power, though treating through a Spanish ambassador at Lisbon.

2. She insists upon treating the Portuguese deserters as unoffending fugitives, who have quitted their country only as a mode of protesting against an unheard-of innovation in the political institutions of the monarchy, while she would denounce the Spanish deserters, as traitors, rebels, &c., in the same instrument in which she absolutely pleads for the Portuguese.

3. She says nothing—will engage for nothing as to the dispersion of the Portuguese deserters within the kingdom of Spain, though they are known to be now assembled under their several leaders, and to have taken the oath of allegiance to Don Miguel, as the King of Portugal, and in default of him to a *Spanish Infanta*. (A just cause in itself of a war to Portugal, if not redressed by Spain.)

4. Lastly, Spain insists upon restoring the arms, &c., by driblets, so as to destroy all the *moral effect* of the restitution. With these terms the British ambassador shall never, with my consent, advise the Portuguese Regency to comply.

Secondly.—As to the question of Regency. The Infanta has declared her readiness to refer the whole matter in doubt to the Emperor Don Pedro, and to abide by his decision; and she has written (or was about to write) herself to Don Miguel to offer this solution of the difficulty.

This is either in exact compliance with our advice, or in anticipation of it. It is all that the Infanta can do.

It removes from Spain, or from Prince Metternich, any pretence for quarrelling with the present Regency, which Prince Metternich quite mistakes and confounds when he speaks of the Infanta having *assumed* the Regency. That which she improperly *assumed* was the right of the Regency during the minority of the Queen. (The question now referred to the E. D. P.) The *sole* Regency, *for a time*, not exceeding that which was wanting to the completion of Don Miguel's twenty-fifth year, became hers by right (and by the consent of all the world except Spain) as soon as the Consti-

tution was established. Spain has no plea for questioning that Regency; and if the Spanish *ambassador* continues to question it, he ceases *ipso-facto* to be an ambassador, and ought, in my opinion, to be sent out of the kingdom.

Thirdly.—As to the insurrections in the north and in the south of Portugal, they are quelled. In the north, the leader, the Marquis of Chaves, has narrowly escaped being taken, and has fled, according to custom, into Spain. *Him*, of course, the Portuguese Government will require to be delivered up to them.

The Marquis d'Abrantes, though the convicted murderer of M. de Loulé, landed in the south to put himself at the head of the insurgents. The insurgents are broken. Abrantes is hiding himself. If he is caught, I presume the recorded sentence against him will be carried into execution (whether death or Angola); and it will then be for those who put him upon this precious enterprise to consider the effect of *his* disgrace upon Don Miguel, his confederate (as all Portugal believes) in the murder of M. de Loulé.

I have no conception that he (Don Miguel) can ever be Regent or *King*, if that affair of Loulé is brought back into public observation.

Fourthly.—I set out with saying that the war by Spain against Portugal has begun. It has so. More than one incursion of Spanish troops (not Portuguese deserters) have taken place; but *one* under circumstances which force it upon our knowledge, and bring the question of *casus fœderis* home to us in a manner which we *cannot* escape.

The enclosed extract of one despatch, and copy of another from Sir W. à Court, will put you in possession of these circumstances. In this case we can do no other than call upon the Portuguese Government (within whose territory Mr. Asheworth resides) for redress. The Portuguese Government will reply that the act was as much an act of war against them as of injury to the British sufferer; and the existence of an aggression on the part of Spain thus constituted, *by our own complaint*, they will call upon us to fulfil the engagements of our treaties. *Will* call upon us, do

I say? They *have* called upon us; and I understand I shall find, upon my arrival in London, an official application from the Marquis de Palmella for the succours which we are bound to furnish.

Now, let M. de Villèle and M. Damas well consider that this is no fault of ours. We have exhausted ourselves in efforts to keep the peace. We have engaged Portugal to concede, and to submit to, more than perhaps in conscience we had a right to advise an independent nation to do or to bear. That the operation of such advice has its limits—and I fear these last acts of Spain have exhausted the patience even of the patient people of Portugal. M. de Villèle says, Spain must be treated as a child. True, when her pranks hurt only herself; but when they extend mischief to others, to embroil first two kingdoms, and then the whole world!—if I had an army in Spain, to keep or to withdraw—I protest I would withdraw it, without hesitation, rather than countenance such proceedings, and bear, as M. Villèle may be sure he will have to bear, the responsibility of all their consequences.

We have a fleet in Portugal: we have threatened to withdraw it in case of misconduct on the part of Portugal, and the threat has never failed of its effect. If it had, it would have been executed.

Observe—and pray desire the Baron de Damas and M. de Villèle to observe—that the first consequence of these proceedings on the part of Spain, the call upon us by Portugal for the fulfilment of our treaties, has—must have—been all this time full in the contemplation of Spain. Those treaties are known to all the world. They are part of the law of nations.

The *casus fœderis* arising (which case Spain in her besotted folly has produced), we cannot, without actual breach of faith, refuse to furnish our stipulated aid. What right has Spain, or any other nation, to presume that we would violate our faith for their convenience?

M. de Villèle knows very well that I am not fond of guarantees: but it is because, *once made*, England must

scrupulously perform the obligations which they impose. Again: No other nation—not Spain herself—has a right to take umbrage at the performance of such obligations. Nothing in the law of nations is clearer than this distinction—viz., If two countries enter into a defensive alliance *generally* and prospectively, engaging to assist each other with stipulated contingents, in case of attack upon either from any third Power, the furnishing such stipulated contingent, the case arising, is not a cause of war—is not an act of war, in respect to the third Power against whom the contingent so furnished is to be employed.

No, not even though that contingent should go to the extent of the whole disposable force of the furnishing party, which, if I mistake not (for I have not the treaties to refer to here at Airaines), is the effect of stipulations between us and Portugal. On the other hand, a similar treaty made between two Powers, one of whom is either actually at war, or on the eve of a rupture with a third Power, *is* an act of hostility towards that third Power.

Thirty thousand British troops sent to Portugal in virtue of existing ancient stipulations, would be no act of war on the part of Great Britain against Spain. A hundred French soldiers entering Portugal in virtue of a convention framed now and *ad hoc*, would be an act of war against Portugal obviously, but also against Great Britain, whose engagements with Portugal are so notorious that no Power can attack Portugal, without knowing that they force Great Britain to come to her assistance.

Here are matters for grave and serious consideration.

Far be it from me to say that this state of things has been produced purposely by Prince Metternich and M. de Moustier. I cannot prove it, and therefore I do not say it; but in my judgment and my conscience I believe it; and I believe that the only chances now of averting any series of calamities of which no man can foresee the end, is that the oath of the Infant, which Prince Metternich so studiously concealed, shall have been made public in Portugal; and I must add, that De Moustier shall be recalled from Spain and

the threat to recall the army, unless Spain retraces her steps, renewed in good earnest.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

Notwithstanding remonstrances, the plot thickened, and within six weeks the crisis had arrived.

CHAPTER XXXII.

INVASION OF PORTUGAL BY SPAIN—LETTERS PREVIOUS TO KING'S MESSAGE ANNOUNCING THE SENDING OF TROOPS TO PORTUGAL—MR. CANNING'S SPEECHES ON THAT OCCASION.

IN the beginning of December (1826), Mr. Canning was satisfied that England would be obliged to send troops to Portugal in fulfilment of her treaties with that country; but it was not till the 8th that the final decision to do so was taken. The following letters to Lord Liverpool and Lord Granville exhibit the workings of his mind during the crisis. The letters show how great an invalid he was at that time: and, when the description of his health before his Portugal speeches is considered, it is matter of astonishment that he had the physical energy to deliver them (as he did) without his voice faltering, or any other symptom of inward failing:—

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, Nov. 19, 1826.

There always comes a criticism on the Speech on the last day, and happy when it is not too late.

In the paragraph about hostilities and peace—'as well singly *as* in conjunction with my Allies,' ought correctly to be 'either' single 'or' in conjunction, &c.; and instead of arresting the progress of hostilities, it ought to be of 'existing hostilities;' and, perhaps, instead of 'in every part of the world,' *in different parts of the world*, would be better.

I write the paragraph as it would stand when altered.

In the H. of C. part, I doubt whether '*permanently*' impaired would not be preferable to 'materially.'

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, Nov. 30, 1826.

I send you the abstract of our engagements with Portugal sealed up, there being no box wide enough to contain it.

With this I send you three of the drafts to Sir W. à Court (which you have no doubt seen in their course before, but) which, read consecutively, will show you how we have laboured to discourage the expectation of our military aid.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private and Secret.*)

MY DEAR L., Foreign Office, Dec. 1, 1826.

I send you a private letter from Granville.

De Moustier's recall is all moonshine. He was, at all events, to leave Madrid on or about the 26th, on leave of absence.

He will not get the recall till that day. In short, he has been continued till the war of Spain against Portugal has begun.

Have you read the *Times?* I wish I saw the answer to it. But our decision of 1823 comes upon us with a vengeance. However, we must do the best we can.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

(*Private and Secret.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, oreign Office, De c. 3, 1826.

This is what I think we ought to do, and without loss of time.

If we let Parliament separate, we may have either to call it again suddenly, which would be ridiculous, or to act without its sanction, which, having had that sanction within our reach, would be impeachable.

My belief is that the measure *will* bring Spain to her senses, and that nothing short of it will. It will also keep France right. We have now a direct assurance from the French Government that they have told the King of Spain that he is not to look for support from France against the consequences of what *has been done*. And the French Government evidently *expect* immediate consequences. The language of Polignac to me, and of Damas to Granville, shows this, as does the language of Lieven to Planta, whom *I* would not see yesterday, because I was aware that he came to fish.

If we do not do anything now, the French Ministers will recover from their first *astoundment*. Spain will apologize. France will retract her threat to abandon Spain to her fate. And Villèle, believing no longer that we are in earnest, will think it safer to side with the Ultra-factions in France and Spain, as the strongest side.

Remember, the French Chambers meet during our adjournment.

I will lay my life, that if we adjourn without bringing this matter to a point, the French King's Speech, at the opening of the session, will be wholly at variance with the professions of his Ministers now. This moment is ours; if we use it, we shall settle the dispute; but if we miss it, I foresee a series of growing difficulties, and the very war, which we wish to avoid, in the distance.

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

P.S.—It is no business of mine departmentally, but I cannot help adding, that this message, and the debate arising upon it, will leave you master of your estimates.

(*Private and Secret.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, Dec. 3, 1826.

I think I can answer your doubts satisfactorily.

The first as to the fact of a demand, I have answered where you have stated it, in the margin.

To the second, I say, that acting upon the report of France is surely safer than upon any other. Lamb is not stated to have quitted Madrid, but only to be in possession of contingent orders to quit, if not satisfied.

Thirdly, I think, that our non-interference is sufficiently indicated by the insertion of the words 'against foreign aggression' at the end of the last paragraph.

Fourthly, I have so altered the phrase at the beginning of that paragraph as to show, that what we want is not immediate armament, but parliamentary assurance of support.

I will not produce the proposal to-day, if you wish it deferred. But we have only this week, and it will take a day, perhaps more, to get the King's sanction (though I have no doubt of that) and signature.

I did not know that you had been unwell.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILE, Foreign Office, Dec. 3, 1826.

When do the French Chambers meet? and how long before their meeting is the Speech concerted? It is very desirable that I should know this accurately, in order that our determination about Portugal may be known to you before the terms of the French Speech are settled. We must wait a little while for despatches from à Court. His last are of the 18th, when nothing was known at Lisbon of the invasion in Tras-os-Montes.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private and Most Secret.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 6, 1826.

Although *my* mind was pretty nearly made up as to the course to be taken upon Palmella's application, and although I cannot but apprehend that the evil hour is only deferred, yet I was much relieved by the arrival of Lamb's despatches this morning.

A *respite* from the dangers of such a war as the next war in Europe will be, is something.

Would to God the French Ministers would join with us in earnest, in the endeavour to convert this respite into a *reprieve*.

Their army in Spain! Is it possible that Villèle should not now see the endless embarrassment in which that army involves him and us, and all the world? But being there, the *next* best thing to the *really* withdrawing it, would be to make use of the threat of its removal, to carry points in which Villèle must feel that we have a common interest.

Assure him that we have no desire so strong as to co-operate cordially with France for the peace of the Peninsula. This will be my language in Parliament whenever opportunity offers; and opportunity will offer assuredly this week, perhaps this day. Let the Speech of the King of France this day se'nnight breathe the same spirit. Let it represent France and England as mediating, if not jointly, simultaneously and correspondently, between the two Peninsular nations; and let the French Government *force* the recognition of the Portuguese Regency by the King of Spain; and an explosion may yet be avoided.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

P.S.—Most inconveniently at this moment Liverpool is laid up, and too ill to attend to business. The respite, therefore, was most opportune on his account.

P.S.—I send you a copy of a private letter which I write by this day's messenger to Lamb.

To be returned.

You may read this to Villèle if you think proper.

G. C.

(*Private and Secret.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, Dec. 8, 1826.

I have been in my bed for the last two days, and not in a state to write or read much. But I have reflected, and the more I have reflected, the more I have convinced myself that we have not an hour to lose in doing our duty by Portugal.

In aid of that conviction came the despatches received this morning from Lamb, and from à Court.

I presume it will not now be thought necessary to wait for another Lisbon mail, not due till this day se'nnight; for whether the rebels, backed by Spain, get on into Portugal, or are, in this instance, driven back, it is plainly manifest that nothing but a direct and unequivocal demonstration on the part of this country can save that from revolution, by foreign intrigue assisting domestic treason.

I hope you are better. I have put off Palmella till to-morrow; and I have put off Sir R. Wilson and his questions in the House of Commons till Tuesday. But by that day we must have decided.

Ever yours,

G. C.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 8, 1826.

The interval between my last letter and this has been passed by me chiefly in my bed. I was very unwell at the moment when I wrote to you; but I was obliged to attend the House of Commons, and hope to bully my incipient illness, whatever it might be, by going on as if nothing was the matter.

This often succeeds; but in the present instance it did not. I woke in the night with a violent pain in my chest, which has yielded to bleeding and blistering, and other approved expedients; but has left me weak beyond what I thought two days' complaint and remedy could have occasioned.

Luckily, in one sense, Liverpool's illness, which began before mine, has also outlasted it. I *could have* attended a Cabinet to-day. He will be ready for me, I hope, to-morrow. But for this illness I should (as I apprehended) have had to answer questions in the House of Commons. Sir R. Wilson proposed to put them to me on Tuesday. I was then so out of sorts (it was late in the evening), that I requested him to postpone them till the next day, sincerely intending then to be in my place that day.

The day of interrogation is now put off till Tuesday.

It will, therefore, be impossible that you should know what passes in time to influence the Speech of the King of France. But I earnestly hope that nothing will be hazarded in that speech which can place the two countries in opposition to each other, whatever our decision may be. There is but one question for that decision. Has the *casus fœderis* occurred? If it has, our treaties tell the rest. My personal opinion, as at present advised, is, that it has. God knows it is not my fault that it has. I must in justice add, that it is not the fault of Portugal. The forbearance of that Government has been superhuman.

M. Villèle's notion of treating Spain like a child is very harmless, when the sports of the child are so. But when the child tosses firebrands into the neighbouring house, one forgets the imbecility in the mischievousness of the prank.

As to the *assurances* of the Spanish Minister, I cannot allow myself to be stultified in the eyes of Europe, by even pretending to believe them. But much, much rather would I that France would remedy the evils of the present state of the Peninsula, than force us to do so. The recall of the French army from Spain would be a hundred-fold more efficacious than the sending of troops from here to Portugal: more efficacious for its immediate object, and more beneficial in its consequences.

But the option rests not with me, nor the responsibility. *Liberavi animam meam.*

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private and Secret.*)

Foreign Office, Dec. 9, 1826.

My dear Granville,

Of all the proofs of confidence which I have enabled you to give to M. Villèle, that which I now transmit to you is the most striking and unequivocal.

Behold the draft of a Message to Parliament settled at Cabinet an hour ago, and about to be submitted to his Majesty; by whom, if it shall be approved (as I doubt not it will), it will be delivered to both Houses on Monday. No human being, out of the Cabinet-room and my innermost room, knows anything of our decision. The despatches from à Court, which enabled me to procure it, arrived only last night..

Palmella, whom I saw this morning, knew nothing even of those despatches. Nor shall I enlighten him upon their result before Monday.

By sending off this messenger to you to-night, I put it into your power to see Villèle the day before the opening of the Chambers; and to show him in what way we mention the King of France, and what justice we do to H.M.C. Majesty's co-operation. Let Villèle deal us equal measure.

Ever affectionately yours,

Geo. Canning.

When I say Villèle, I leave you at liberty to include Damas, if you and V. think proper. But I think you should see V. first, and take his counsel as to D.

I am still very poorly, but hope to be stout for Tuesday. Liverpool, I am grieved to say, is much worse than I, and has no chance of being again in the House of Lords before Christmas.

(*Secret.*)

Foreign Office, Dec. 10, 1826,
Four P.M.

My dear Liverpool,

I dare not venture out to-day (such as the day is) to ask you how you do? Let Willimott or Brooksbank send me a line of satisfactory information.

I send you a draft of circular such as you suggested in your note of last night.

Return it at your leisure. There is no hurry. It cannot go till Wednesday. Upon the other point of your note I have had a talk with the Duke of Wellington, as upon all other points connected with our present project.

Nothing could be more satisfactory than the whole of the conversation with him, Lord Bathurst, and Lord Melville.

The King has returned the draft of the Message 'most entirely approved.' I send both copies to-night for his Majesty's signature.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

On the 11th of December the Message was brought down. It was taken next day into consideration.

The letter to Lord Granville proves the indomitable spirit, which struggled against physical ailment to prevent any bad consequences arising from failure in fulfilment of duty.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE. Foreign Office, Dec. 14, 1826.

Charles will have told you, or *will* tell you when he arrives (for this messenger will, perhaps, arrive before him), that he left me yesterday morning ill in bed, having brought back, by the debate on Tuesday night, all the *rheumatics* which I had been bleeding and blistering away during the preceding week.

I was obliged to get up to go to dine at Prince Esterhazy's. It would have been a heinous omission not to go there, as Esterhazy takes the Message as an act of hostility to his Court, knowing, as he well does, that Metternich is the author of all the mischief, which has come upon us.

I expected to be quite knocked up by this sacrifice to propriety. But, on the contrary, I am marvellously well to-day, and, especially as Parliament is up for two months, feel a confident hope that I may continue so.

You will see that the occasion, which I so often predicted to Villèle, arose, and that I was obliged to justify, in the best manner that I could (that is to say, in the very manner in which I told him I would, and must do so, if compelled), our tame acquiescence in the continuance of the French army in Spain.

Had I felt myself authorized to affirm that the period of evacuation was fixed and certain, I should have had no need of any other defence. But I had no authority to quote the letter of the King of France; and it would have been an abuse of confidence to do so. Nor do I think a declaration, made in July, before the events of Portugal, absolutely binding after those events, unless renewed subsequently to them.

I hoped that Polignac might relieve me in this difficulty. I wrote to him on Monday the letter of which the enclosed is a copy, concluding (as you see) with a desire that he would call upon me the next day. He acknowledged my letter, but took no notice of the invitation, and *did not come.* I asked him yesterday at Esterhazy's why he came not? He pretended to have overlooked the invitation; but in truth it was quite evident that he had purposely avoided seeing me, until he should have received the instructions of his Court or *Congregation* upon his Majesty's Message. I asked him whether, *if* I had seen him, he would have given me authority to hold out any hope of the withdrawing of the French army according to the tenor of the King's letter? He professed, if not total ignorance of that letter, a very imperfect acquaintance with its contents; and said plainly that he could not have taken upon himself to give me any assurance on the subject. I was, therefore, and even if I had seen P., should equally have been, thrown upon my own resources to exculpate the British Government from a charge of pusillanimity for submitting to a state of things so wholly alien to British policy of good times.

So far as I am personally concerned, I cannot regret the extremity to which I was driven; for, if I know anything of the House of Commons from thirty-three years' experience, or if I may trust to what reaches me in report of feelings

out-of-doors, the declaration of the obvious but unsuspected truth, that 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,' has been more grateful to English ears and to English feelings ten thousand times, than would have been the most satisfactory announcement of the intention of the French Government to withdraw its army from Spain.

Personally for Villèle I am sorry, because I am afraid I shall have brought both his Oppositions upon his back. But that is no fault of mine. The fault is in the position itself, from which, if he is wise, he will extricate himself the first opportunity. A good opportunity will arise when, after the settlement of the dispute between Portugal and Spain, we withdraw our troops from Lisbon. But once there, he must not expect that we will, under any circumstances, withdraw them, leaving the French army in Spain. *This*, however, you need not say to Villèle: rather present the matter to him in a contrary sense, as intended to afford him the means of getting out of his difficulty with honour.

From your letter of Monday night I am perfectly convinced that Villèle expected this Peninsular discussion to run in the traces of 1823: that we should remonstrate and do nothing—that *my Ultra* friends would cripple *me*, and so enable *him* to be beaten by his Cabinet without any unpleasant consequences. To prevent any such mistake, it was that I desired the Duke of Wellington to speak in the debate, and he did so. Nor will it escape Villèle's observation that the decision of the House of Commons was quite as enthusiastic for active exertion now, as it was in 1823 for passive neutrality.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

The letter on the 19th announces his recovery.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 19, 1826.

My despatches of to-day are not for communication either to Villèle or Damas, being written in somewhat of an ill-humour,

if not under some shade of suspicion of instability of purpose on the part of Damas, and of tergiversation on the part of Villèle. I hope I am not uncharitable, or rather, I hope I am; for I would rather that the conduct of the French Ministers should contradict than confirm my misgivings.

You must lose no time in clearing up the two or three variances between Polignac's version of his instructions, and your reports of conferences with Damas.

The menace respecting the Switzers is vitally important. I confess I incline to apprehend that Villèle has misled you, and that he told you of that as done which he only meant to do, and has failed of accomplishing.

I am quite well again, and not a little satisfied with the most unexpected conclusion of the late odious little session. How fortunate that we were obliged to meet—much against our will—for corn! What an additional difficulty would it have been, if we had had to summon Parliament purposely for Portugal!

We have nothing new from that country.

I hope to send you a corrected report of the speeches of this day se'nnight in a day or two.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 22, 1826.

The editor of the *Times* has been more lucky than you, for he has 'obtained a copy' of the Baron de Damas' speech in time to publish a translation of it in his paper of this morning.

Presuming the authenticity of that translation, I am really at a loss for words to express my admiration of the frankness, *loyauté*, good faith, good temper, and, I may add, good sense, of that speech. If my suffrage can be of any value to M. Damas, I beg that you will lose no time in conveying it to him.

I do not know whether the copy, which I destine for him, of my speeches of the 12th, will be an acceptable return for

the pleasure which Baron Damas's has afforded me. But I flatter myself he will see, on a calm perusal of the passages, which I suppose to be those which he lamented as having made a '*fâcheuse impression*,' that there is nothing in them, as really spoken and correctly reported, to give offence or to create alarm to the French Government.

On the contrary, I am firmly persuaded that the opportunity afforded to me of settling the mind of this country upon the sore subject of the occupation, has removed the only obstacle—and it was a serious obstacle, and would have become more so every day—to a thorough, cordial, good understanding and an unreserved co-operation between the two Governments.

Assure M. Damas that such is my personal wish, and such shall be my earnest endeavour, and whatever he may finally think of my speeches, tell him that nothing can alter my opinion of his.

Ever, my dear Granville,
Yours affectionately
GEO. CANNING.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 22, 1826.

I do feel for Villèle, and I am very sorry to have given him pain, or occasioned him any difficulty. But I am consoled by the conviction that I have done him permanent good at the expense of a little temporary annoyance; and that I have cleared his position and my own of an embarrassment which must always, when uncleared, have perplexed our relations towards each other.

The French occupation of Spain must have come into discussion sooner or later, if the events in Portugal had not occurred. It is fortunate, in my opinion, that those events pressed it forward, so that I was enabled to treat and to dispose of it, collaterally and incidentally. It is now out of our way, and I shall have no more difficulty with it.

I warned Villèle of the coming necessity of such a dis-

cussion in September. I send you herewith (lest you should not have it present to your recollection) an extract of my record of that part of my conversation with him.

Could I have taken upon myself to consider the contents of the K. of France's letter to H.C. Majesty as still in force (notwithstanding the 'disturbances' of the Peninsula), and could I have thought myself authorized to make use of my knowledge of those contents, I certainly should have put down all inquiry and discussion by announcing the evacuation for April. But would not that have been more inconvenient for Villèle, even if it had been only an anticipation of a settled intention? and what it would have been to me, if my anticipation had not hereafter been realized!

Besides, I *could* not take such a licence without direct authority. I wrote to Prince Polignac to beg him to call upon me, with the express intention of asking if he could give me such authority. He did not come to my appointment; but if he had, you know well enough, from my despatch of last week, what his answer would have been.

So far from regretting (except for its temporary inconvenience to Villèle) that the occasion of dealing with this topic arose, I rejoice in the removal of what must have been an everlasting impediment to our cordial understanding.

The matter is now, as Villèle said of the subject of Portugal in the conference of September, '*vuide.*' I shall hear no more of it, nor shall Villèle from me. You did very right in pointing out to him that passage in my speech which warned the House against erecting the occupation into 'a point of honour.' I verily believe that it will turn out in the end that I shall have saved the point of honour for France, and enabled her to withdraw, without discredit, from a position which she cannot indefinitely maintain, by giving our army in Lisbon, as a *pendant*, to be withdrawn (when all this business is over) simultaneously with hers.

So far from thinking that I have done Villèle permanent injury (however I may have rubbed and cuffed him for the moment), I flatter myself that I have done him a great good.

Who is there that does not know that the occupation of Spain was not his measure? that he was *entrainé*, against his wishes and his better judgment? What is said, therefore, of the unprofitableness and burden of that occupation, is, if rightly employed by him, an arm against the faction which forced him in 1823 into a situation, of the nature of which, and of its conflicting difficulties, there is now but one opinion.

But, I flatter myself also, that I have done him a still greater service, in preventing him from being again *entrainé*, on this occasion, into a worse scrape than even the occupation of Spain.

I told you in a former letter, that if we did not take our stand at once, things would go on in the same course, and end in the like catastrophe as in 1823. Villèle would then have said to me again, as he did say to me in talking about what happened in 1823, that *I* had failed him; that he would have held firm against war, if I could have given him efficient support (meaning the support of an energetic remonstrance, coupled with a decided demonstration), but that when I was beaten in my Cabinet, as he in his, he had nothing to do but go with the tide. The tide this time would have carried him (Polignac's way) to the frontiers of Portugal, with a *reinforced* French army in Spain. Depend upon it, this would have been so. Are you apprized of a correspondence (of three letters only) which passed between P. Metternich and Villèle soon after the importation of the Constitution into Portugal? It was to this effect:—

'Reinforce your army in the Peninsula, and protect Spain 'against the contagion of the Portuguese Assemblies, as you 'protected yourselves against that of the Spanish Cortes in '1823.'

'I cannot march into Portugal,' answered Villèle, 'but 'with *la Charte* on my banners.' '*Censez que je n'en ai* '*rien dit*,' was the reply.

Here, to be sure, was evidence of a good disposition on the part of Villèle. But, think you, that if our resistance 'had failed him,' as in 1823, P. Metternich would not have

returned to the charge? And pressed as Villèle appears to have been in Council (even without the Austrian aid), who can answer for it that he would not, in that case, have gone for a quiet life into the very traces of *1823*? Take the trouble to read over the extracts which I have had made for you of the correspondence of 1823, and see what reliance could have been placed in the efficiency of diplomatic notes, or verbal engagements and professions, however sincere, against the force of circumstances, and the combined pressure of the Crown and the Mitre. Recollect, too, that in 1823 the Church was but yet in the *egg*, and that Louis XVIII. was no bigot. I am persuaded, then, that to save Villèle from another *entrainment*, and this country from a second mortification (but one, in this instance, of so deep a stain that it must have been washed out in blood), there was no instrument to be relied on but the House of Commons, and no language to be employed with effect less strong than that which I employed there.

The only other point, indeed, besides that of Spain, on which my language appears to be considered as having been strong, is that of the danger of a war of opinion. I send you a copy of my speech of *1823*, in reference to which that topic was used, and in conjunction with which what I have now said must be construed. I have marked the passage in pages 80 and 81.

This voluminous letter, with its enclosures, will furnish you, I hope, with the means of satisfying Villèle's doubts (if he has entertained any) of the spirit in which I spoke in the House of Commons, of removing any misapprehensions of the meaning of the particular passages in my speeches, and of assuring him that my object (and the object which, if upon reflection he thinks and feels with me, I verily believe I shall have achieved) was to bring the two Governments—above all things to bring him and me—into closer contact, by extinguishing once for all the only spark of dissatisfaction between the two nations—a spark which any untoward accident might, at the least convenient moment, have blown into a flame.

Above all things, I repeat, do not let him believe that there was, in anything that I said, or thought, or felt, on that occasion the slightest intention of disrespect, or sentiment of unkindness towards him.

Ever, my dear Granville,
Yours affectionately,
GEO. CANNING.

P.S.—I am not surprised at what you tell me of Chateaubriand's attack, for he knows very well that the invasion of Spain was *his* work, not Villèle's, and he knows very well that I know it.

G. C.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 26, 1826.

I have written so much at length to Charles,* that I should not perhaps write to you at all, if it were not to acknowledge, and to desire you to acknowledge for me, M. Lally de Tolendal's excellent papers.

Surely there cannot be a clearer proof of the real meaning of my warning, than that Lally should hypothetically justify it on the supposition that the passage which he cites, *was* that quoted by me.

Tell M. Lally that the coincidence of our Virgilian recollections flatters as much as it interprets me justly. Tell him that I wish him to look at the storms, of which I dread the rising.

Vultuque cœlum tempestatesque serenat.

Not with one by which I may exaggerate them into danger and desolation.

Above all things, tell him that I thank him most cordially for his confidence in my opinion, and for the unhesitating

---

* Lord Seaford.

expression of his own on my behalf." This is all that I have time left to say to-day.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—I send you another dozen of speeches. There is one correction more in page 50.

Pray send Baron Louis one, or more.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 29, 1826.

Villèle is right as to Polignac. We did agree that he should be considered as ornamental only. But then why was he suddenly wound up and set a-going by Damas, like an ormolu clock, or a Chinese mandarin on casters?

It was that sudden sign of life that perplexed me. However, no ill shall come of it.

I have never answered directly Villèle's invitation to tell him what I think he should do, or aim at doing, at Madrid.

I hardly see how I can do so till we know our position, and the general state of affairs at Lisbon.

In the interval, however, I suppose of all that he proposes, recognition, change of Ministers (Calomarde above all), and removal of all contumacious authorities, and of the Princess of Beira.

These to *prevent* hostilities.

To guard against their inevitable recurrence, if I were *France*, I would further insist upon reformation in the Government, and security for a public and responsible administration (or I would recall my troops), and (recall or not) payment of all the just debts of Spain, that to us included.

But we have no right to dictate to France what she shall advise, or even to Spain what she shall do, after the decisive step which we have taken, till we know its effect upon Spain. It may lead to an expression of a willingness on her part to buy off our vengeance. It may (though that is not contem-

plated generally as so likely as I am inclined to think it) inflame pride, confirm obstinacy, and provoke defiance. *Nous verrons.*

From Lisbon we must now hear in twenty-four hours, for the wind (since my other letter was written) has veered, and is to bring a tempest *from* the west.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 29, 1826.

I need hardly say that I am highly pleased with the activity which you have put into your communications respecting my '*fameux discours*,' and with the effects which it appears already to have produced in so many important instances. Damas is a saint (in the best sense of the word), and Villèle an angel, to have admitted readily the satisfactoriness of *any* explanations upon a matter which has unhappily touched both their feelings and their interests so sorely.

If their feelings recover (as there seems every prospect that they will), I shall not feel for their interests, because I am sure it will become evident more and more, the more my *argument* is considered, that it was against the policy—not of Villèle—but of those who are Villèle's worst enemies, that it was exclusively directed.

I am pleased with Pasquier's and Molé's notes, and still more with Molé's repeated expression of satisfaction.

Planta wrote to you by the post of yesterday that we preferred a separate publication; but I shall be contented with your decision, whatever it may have been. I set great store on the publication of extracts from the speech of 1823, because the origin of the topic being there, the derivative influence as to its bearing now is very important.

There is nothing to be done with newspapers *here* in the way of contradiction or correction. I have been obliged, as you know, to disavow the supposed official newspaper officially. Any communication with others puts me entirely in their

power. It must never be forgotten that the *Times*, though borne away on this occasion by the tide of public opinion, is at bottom as inimical to me personally as ever.

Pray observe in printing (if it be yet time) that the word 'power,' in page 37, is used by me in its scientific sense, metaphorically—as one should say, *lever*; it is the confusion of this with the ordinary sense of power of a country that contributed to much of the mistake or misrepresentation; a misrepresentation in the original report unintentional, as I verily believe, though since persisted in from love of mischief.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 29, 1826.

I do not know whether Lamb left his last despatches open for your perusal. I frankly own I do not like the tone of them. He seems entirely to have mistaken the motives of the suspension of his recall; and (what is extraordinary) not to have recovered from his mistake upon the receipt of the King's Message.

I dislike also his captiousness—if not hostility—towards Portugal, to whom, whatever else may be at all questionable in her conduct (and I see very little), the praise of patience and long-suffering, and of deference for our advice, cannot be fairly denied.

I shall send a messenger to Lamb after the arrival of the next despatches from Lisbon: till then it would be useless to write. We are in hourly expectation of the return of the steam-vessel which sailed from the Downs on Saturday, the 16th.

The wind is perseveringly adverse to ordinary navigation from the westward.

Our last accounts are of the 12th. We calculate the intelligence of our determination to send troops would reach Lisbon on the 21st or 22nd. There is an interval of a week therefore, during which the rebels may have been making progress, and during which the Government may

have been unassured of assistance. It is a fearful interval, and if it should have been productive of ill, how shall I forgive myself for not having pressed the decision on the 3rd, which I obtained on the 9th, which (in the case supposed) would just have made the whole difference? But, *Dii meliora.*

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

The better things did occur—the troops arrived in time.

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Brighton, Jan. 27, 1827.

The person from whom the enclosed intelligence comes has often given me useful information.

I cannot help having my misgivings about the French Government still: and if they do not withdraw their Swiss (the only convincing proof of sincerity), I shall not be at ease as to their future conduct.

I have not the shadow of a doubt that Prince Metternich has been from the beginning, and is still, moving heaven and earth to overthrow the Portuguese Constitution.

I do not suspect that Villèle has committed himself, or will commit himself to Prince Metternich; but I cannot help fearing that he reserves to himself a *locus pœnitentiæ*, in case things should go ill internally in Portugal, and that he would not be very sorry that the occasion of availing himself of it should arise. In truth, he must see as clearly as Metternich does, that a free constitution, upheld and flourishing in Portugal, will be found in the long run incompatible with the monkish Government of Spain: and he must feel (what no doubt Prince Metternich takes care to make him feel sorely) that the right of Spain to invade Portugal, *en haine* of the Constitution of 1826, is as good as was that of France to invade Spain *en haine* of the Cortes of 1822. It is no business of ours to fight the battles of Villèle's consistency: but the knowledge that he has them daily to fight, and the recollection that he professed as much indisposition to invade Spain in 1822, as he now professes to

see Portugal invaded by Spain, must naturally put us on our guard; and lead us as Johnson (Dr. J., I mean) said, I think of Ossian-Macpherson, 'to believe rather what he shall prove, than what he shall say.'

Might you not ask Villèle if he knows anything of Prince Metternich's *intrigues* at Lisbon?—of a certain *M. Pilate,* for instance, brother of a man of that name in Prince Metternich's employment, who went to Portugal through France and Spain, at the head of a little detachment of Jesuits? and let us see how he answers.

You will of course ask the question as if you took for granted that Villèle must feel himself full as much interested as we do in defeating all such schemes of internal disturbance in Portugal.

I have just received your telegraphic message—à Court *has* mentioned the intention of the Portuguese Government to receive Casa Flores again as ambassador, on the Court of Madrid's agreeing to receive Lima again as chargé d'affaires. You will have seen that I consider Lamb as having pitched his demands too low, especially in this particular of the recognition. But he had taken his ground before he knew of our determination to send troops to Lisbon. It might be difficult for him to shift it, on the knowledge of that determination, unless Spain gave him an opportunity. But still, I confess I think that he does not appear to attach sufficient importance to the change which is made by it in our situation, and in his.

My instructions to him in communicating the King's Message were (as you must remember, for I think and hope the despatch went through you) to lie upon his oars, and see what Spain would be induced by France and other Powers to do. I trust he has not gone on negotiating himself after receiving this instruction. It would be to throw away the advantage of his position. It is the business of France now to buy off (at the expense of Spain) our hostility against Spain; but it will be a sad thing if Lamb shall have *under*bidden France in this respect, and released her from her task—perhaps even enabled her to

keep her Swiss at Madrid—by taking less than France appeared to feel herself bound to obtain for us.

Yet I am not without my fears on that account. I am consequently very anxiously impatient for the next news from Madrid. The language for you to hold about the telegraphic message, is, that it is clearly the fruit of Lamb's remonstrances before he had information of the King's Message in his pocket.

Ever, my dear Granville,
Sincerely and affectionately yours,
GEORGE CANNING.

The following letter relates to the report of the published speeches on Portugal. Owing to the word 'corrected' having been used in the title-page, a rumour was studiously and maliciously propagated that that report materially modified the sentiments which had been uttered in the House of Commons.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Brighton, Jan. 17, 1827.

I return Lally Tolendal's last letter, and the copy of your answer to it, which is perfect.

Certainly the word 'corrected' was unlucky—'substance' perhaps would have been better, or better still, 'speeches' simply. But I intended to *avow* the publication, and 'corrected report' was the fit title for *that* purpose.

The mistake in France arises from two things, first, that the word 'report' (I suppose) is not used to signify, as with us, the voluntary and unauthorized record of speeches spoken in Parliament. Secondly, that the word *correct*, is not applied (I also suppose) to the technical operation of setting right the errors of the press. The precise meaning of 'corrected report' is the newspaper record of 'speeches looked 'over by the speaker, and made conformable to what was 'actually spoken by him.'

Certainly, however, in the translation (if there should be yet time) Lally's suggestion to substitute '*authentique*' for

'*corrigé*' would be very advisable. Whether '*rapport*' will at all give the sense of report, is more than I know.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

Pray thank Lally yet once again for his friendly solicitude and anxiety on my account.

The letter which follows was dictated to me by Mr. Canning, when in bed, during a severe illness at Brighton. It was the last which (I believe) he ever addressed to Lord Liverpool.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Brighton, Feb. 4, 1827.

The best way of answering your questions upon Portugal will be to state to you the course in which my thoughts have been travelling, by which you will perceive that, though we have not divided the subject into the same heads, the conclusions at which we arrive are not very remote from each other.

It never occurred to me that we could properly determine and openly state the determination to leave our troops in Portugal, so long as any French army remained in Spain, after France had taken the course which she did take upon the King's Message, vouching for our facts, justifying our policy, and lending to us, as she unquestionably has, an honest and efficient support, beyond, perhaps, what we had a right to demand or to expect from her, under all the difficulties of her own situation.

It would, I think, be an ungenerous return for this conduct on the part of France to raise any angry question at the present moment upon the subject of her occupation of Spain. It cannot be truly pretended, however probable it might be *à priori*, that such would be the effect of her occupation; that occupation has, in fact, retarded the settlement between Spain and Portugal. It must be admitted that the partial reduction of it by the recall of the Swiss troops, whether in truth it had the effect or not, was intended to have the

effect of facilitating that settlement. But when I say France, I mean Villèle; and believing, as I do, that he would be glad of any opportunity of getting out of Spain without dishonour, I should think it very unfair, as well as unwise, not to allow him the opportunity of making any advantage which he may think expedient of our withdrawing from the Peninsula. It is in this sense, that is, as a mode of saving the point of honour to France, that I have latterly desired Granville to call Villèle's attention to that opportunity.

While I would avoid, then, the putting forward of the French garrisons in Spain as the motive of our continuing in Portugal, after our work there was completely done, I think the incidental facility which may be derived, in respect to the withdrawing of the French garrisons from Spain, from the withdrawing of ours from Lisbon, of great importance; and I should certainly, therefore, prefer that mode of proceeding which would afford that facility in the greatest degree. It appears to me, further, I confess, that the mode which would afford that facility in the greatest degree, is also the mode which would be in other respects the most advisable.

Our objects in the expedition to Portugal were—first, to repel foreign aggression, and to put down (or enable the Government of Portugal to put down) the internal disturbances which had grown out of it. Secondly, to obtain from Spain atonement for the past, by the establishment of direct political relations with Portugal; and security for the future, by satisfactory assurances and engagements. Thirdly, to watch over the full performance of such engagements and assurances.

The first and second of these objects may be admitted to be accomplished. Aggression is repelled. Insurrection is subdued. The assurances obtained from Spain are such as we cannot but say that we believe; but remains—the performance of them. Now, as the essence of the Spanish apology for past disappointment in this respect, consists in the alleged disobedience of Spanish authorities on the frontier to the orders of the Government; and, as it is impossible not to

apprehend that the new army, levied for the execution of the present engagements of the Court of Madrid, *may* prove either unfaithful or inadequate to its purpose, I think we should leave the third object of our expedition miserably incomplete, if we were to withdraw our force from Portugal before the performance of the assurances and engagements of Spain shall have been fully and satisfactorily ascertained.

How many months will be sufficient for this purpose I cannot pretend to determine. Nor is it, in my opinion, desirable to measure the interval so much by the time to elapse, as by the purposes to be accomplished. One thing is clear to my mind, and appears to be so to yours, which is, that we are not out of our difficulty until the question of Regency shall have been settled; or at least until it shall appear in what tone and temper the discussion of that question is likely to be taken up by foreign Powers, when anything practical is to be decided upon it.

The first impulse upon this question may probably be given by the arrival of the decision of the Emperor, Don Pedro, solicited but not prescribed by Mr. Gordon. He was to solicit the decision of the litigated point of the Regency, not to suggest in whose favour that decision should be.

It is possible, however, that Don Pedro, having actually despatched his ship of the line with an invitation to D. Miguel to repair to Brazil, may suspend any answer to the reference made to him respecting the Regency until M. Neümann's* arrival at Rio de Janeiro. It is still further possible that, holding all that Neümann may be instructed to say to him very cheap, Don Pedro may take no step whatever until he shall have received the Infant D. Miguel's own refusal to embark for Rio de Janeiro.

It is possible that, either upon the intimation through Neümann, or upon the more authentic refusal of D. Miguel, Don Pedro may revoke altogether his intention of conferring

* Austrian Plenipotentiary. Many years Secretary of Embassy at the British Court.

the Regency on D. Miguel when of age (if such were, indeed, his intention), and may confer it on the Infanta Regent, until the majority of the Queen.

In either of the latter cases, might not Portugal, left to herself, with a Spanish army on her frontiers, be exposed to the most imminent danger?—a danger which the mere existence of British troops in Portugal would avert.

Observe, it is matter of indifference to me, because matter of indifference to British interests, whether the Regency during the minority of the Queen be vested in the Infanta, or in Don Miguel, provided it be so vested in the one or the other by competent and acknowledged authority. But it is idle to delude ourselves, or to suffer ourselves to be deluded, with the notion that the partisans of D. Miguel mean any such thing. They mean (to a man) that D. Miguel should find his way through the Regency (as the readiest open door) to counter-revolution and the restoration of absolute monarchy. The attempt at this object by a foreign force, after ours had been withdrawn, would replunge us in all the difficulties from which we have so happily extricated ourselves on the present occasion. The withdrawing of our army in part, in great part even to Gibraltar, would, in my opinion, be no adequate provision against this, or any similar danger. On the contrary, the greatly increasing of the garrison of Gibraltar would imply of itself the admission of *some* danger; but whether continued or contingent, whether arising from the French in the occupation of Cadiz, or from the Spaniards on the frontiers of Portugal, or from both, would be the fruitful source of anxious conjecture.

My opinion, therefore, inclines strongly to the second branch of your alternative—the leaving our army in Portugal until all the pending questions of the Regency shall be settled, preparing with as much speed and diligence as is consistent with our principles and with our discretion, the best means of an amicable settlement of them.

But I do not think that this reason for our stay need be publicly alleged. I think that the complete performance of the task which we originally prescribed to ourselves—that of

rendering Portugal safe, either against hostile aggression or against foreign interference in its concerns, justifies—nay, prescribes—the continuance of our army in Portugal, until that kingdom shall have been placed beyond those dangers; that is, until it shall have been proved that the Government of Spain has not only the intentions which it professes, but the power to compel obedience in those by whom its intentions are to be executed.

I think that the question of the Regency will almost necessarily fall within the period to which, on this plain and simple ground, the stay of our army will be prolonged; and, if so, I incline to think it unnecessary, that the specific reason of the expected discussion should be declared. (I mean, of course, to foreign Powers, not to the Cabinet.)

Lastly, I think that the opportunity afforded by that continued stay of our army may be turned to account, not only without offence, but in the most amicable manner, for affording to M. Villèle a retreat out of Spain—a retreat which I entertain the most perfect confidence that he sincerely desires, and for which it is just at this moment a peculiar facility that Austria, contrary to all human expectation, is setting the example by withdrawing her troops from Naples.

I think that by withdrawing our army from Portugal precipitately, we may throw this opportunity away.

Such is the whole of my opinions upon a subject which strikes me as rather complicated than difficult, but of which, in dividing it into its parts, the principles and the policy appear to me sufficiently plain.

I must only remark to you, in concluding, that I assume, without reasoning, two propositions—first, that the permanent establishment of the French army in Spain is a disparagement to this country, and an evil to Europe; secondly, that the imposition of D. Miguel upon Portugal, not by his brother the Emperor, as Regent, but by foreign force or intrigues as absolute King, would, after all that has passed, be a deadly disgrace as well as a lasting injury to England.

If there are persons who maintain the contrary of these two propositions (you, I am sure, are not among them), let

us have these discussions fairly out before we come to any decision. Let not a decision involving such consequences, be taken on apparently other grounds. There is no hurry.

I send you a copy of an official note received from the Spanish Minister, enclosing a despatch from his Court, and of the answer which I return to it. You will see that, though I do not anticipate in my answer anything relating to the movements of our troops, there is enough in it to prepare Spain for the possibility of their continuance in Portugal, until all the engagements of Spain shall have been effectually carried into execution.

Adieu! I am quite exhausted with dictating this long letter.

The following to Lord Granville relates to the voyage of the Infant Don Miguel to Brazil:—

(*Private and Confidential.*)

My dear Granville, Brighton, Feb. 16, 1827.

Although I am not equal to variety of business, I will contrive to answer your separate and confidential despatch of the 12th of February, in order that Villèle may be assured that I am ready to repay confidence with confidence.

If Don Miguel proceeds to Rio de Janeiro in the ship now waiting for him at Brest, I see no objection to the escort which M. de Villèle proposes—one object of which, I take for granted to be, among others, to prevent the *Jean VI.* from entering the mouth of the Tagus on her way outwards, either *by mistake,* or *from stress of weather.* It will, however, be matter of very serious consideration, to what extent our respective commanders should be instructed to push their opposition to such a diversion, if Don Miguel should take it into his head.

It is clear that the orders of the commander of the *Jean VI.* must be to return direct to Rio de Janeiro. *We* should, therefore, be enforcing the Emperor's orders, even if counteracting Don Miguel's wishes.

But still it would be a ticklish exercise of assumed authority.

I agree with you, however, that the case is not likely to arise.

That Metternich will not be induced to let go his hold on Don Miguel, and you will have been already enabled by the instructions, which, I think, must have crossed your last despatches, to inform M. de Villèle, that we can do nothing at Vienna in aid of the Emperor Don Pedro's invitation.

I have already told Prince Esterhazy that, in my individual opinion, the plain and simple course would be, that Don Miguel should obey implicitly his Imperial brother's summons.

That a first refusal will only put off the voyage until after the receipt of Neümann's first despatch, which will probably bring a peremptory renewal of the summons; that the only effect, therefore, of it will be, to postpone indefinitely the object which we all have at heart for the separation of the two Crowns; but that it may also have effects of a different nature.

That the example of disobedience to the will of Don Pedro set by Don Miguel, might be imitated at Lisbon, and that new questions might arise out of this complication, difficult to settle, and, therefore, most desirable to avoid. I added, however, that not having been called into council, or in any degree associated in the trust confided to the Emperor of Austria, the British Government did not feel itself authorized to interfere with any expression of its opinion; that Sir Henry Wellesley had the strictest orders not to seek, nor even to avail himself of, any opening for direct communication with Don Miguel; that we would have no responsibility for a decision over which we had no control; but that we must consider ourselves as perfectly free to act under the new circumstances, whatever they might be, which might hereafter arise out of that decision.

This is the substance of what I have stated to Esterhazy.

M. Villèle's thoughts have been travelling in the same course as mine, in anticipating possible mischiefs from Don Miguel's refusal to go to Brazil. Suppose the Emperor, in resentment of this refusal, to declare his abdication void or suspended; to resolve to retain his daughter at Rio de

Janeiro, and to govern Portugal with long reins from Brazil, either indefinitely, or until the young Queen shall have attained years of discretion.

Suppose the authorities in Lisbon to resent in their turn, whether as against the Emperor or as against Don Miguel, or both, this retraction of Portuguese independence.

These are only instances, but they are enough to show how fruitful of difficulties the decision of the Court of Vienna may be, and to explain the grounds of our anxiety to avoid being implicated in it.

Ever, my dear Granville,
Affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

Don Miguel positively declined to obey his brother's orders to go to Brazil. He remained at Vienna till after Mr. Canning's death. Owing to the ill-health of the Infanta Regent, which for some weeks wholly disabled her from performing the functions of Government, affairs continued in Portugal in an unsatisfactory, and unsettled state. But the main object of the expedition was fully attained, as the Spanish Government ultimately abandoned its plan to overthrow the Portuguese Constitution through the instrumentality of Portuguese deserters, and the peace of Europe was preserved.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RICHARD FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.

THE following letters illustrate the correspondence of Richard first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, recently published by his son, the present Duke. When Mr. Canning's destination was India, his Grace happened to visit Plymouth Sound in his yacht, and having on that occasion gone aboard the *Jupiter*, a 50-gun ship, which had been ordered by the Admiralty to be prepared for taking the new Governor-General to India, his Grace thought that she was rather 'too deep in the water' to be pleasant. He communicated his opinion to Lord Morley, with a recommendation that an application should be made to the Admiralty for another ship. The late Duke was a very fat man, and in reply to the notification of his Grace's recommendation, the following answer was returned:—

MY DEAR MORLEY, Gloucester Lodge, Aug. 14, 1822.

I am much obliged to you for your report of the D. of B.'s caution respecting the *Jupiter*. Could you have the experiment made *without* the D. of B. on board? as that *might* make a difference.

I returned yesterday from paying a farewell visit at Dropmore, and afterwards to the Dean of Ch. Ch. at Nuneham, and on Friday I set out on a similar errand to Mr. Bolton's on Windermere, in my way (or rather seventy miles out of it) to Liverpool.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

After Lord Londonderry's decease, when all eyes were turned to Mr. Canning as his successor, the Duke of Buckingham gave evidence of his activity, by writing the letter which follows to *Lady* Morley (late dowager.)

MY DEAR MADAM, Avington, Sept. 4, 1822.

I hope that your ladyship will not consider me as intruding upon your patience, by informing Lord Morley and you that I have reason to know Mr. Canning's arrangement was submitted to the King yesterday, who has desired to take till *to-morrow* to think of it. The fears entertained, are, that Mr. Canning will urge unreasonable claims. I, who have made no secret of my conviction that no other course existed but that of application to him, am very anxious that his friends should impress him with the conviction, the propriety of which his good sense would point out, of the good policy which would result from his proving the non-existence of any ground for such alarm. Lord Morley and your ladyship know the peculiar feelings of the King respecting Mr. Canning, and will, I am sure, agree with me that it is highly necessary at this time, when the ball is at his foot, to take care to do nothing to inflame unpleasant prejudices. Lord Morley and your ladyship will be pleased to consider this letter as *strictly private*. I desire no answer to it, but by apprizing Mr. Canning's friends *confidentially* of the state of the transaction, I hope to aid the attainment of an object so important to the country. If your ladyship does notice the receipt of this letter, I trust that it will be by pardoning the liberty that I have taken.

I have the honour to be,
My dear Madam,
Your Ladyship's very faithful, humble servant,
BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.

It is to this letter that Mr. Charles W. Wynn refers in his letter to the Duke of Buckingham, printed in the *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.*, dated

September 28, 1822; but he describes it as addressed to *Lord* not *Lady* Morley.

Mr. Wynn writes:—

Canning told me that he had originally determined, before he came to town, to have stipulated for the promotion of Huskisson before he made himself 'the immense sacrifice he did in accepting office;' but that the concurrent opinion of his friends had deterred him from this, and that he was most especially moved to it by your letter to Lord Morley, which had peculiar weight with him, and that now standing, as he did, single in the Cabinet, he felt that he was entitled to have every facility afforded to him, or that it might still be necessary for him to retire.*

The following letter explains the negotiations then carried on, which are alluded to in this extract from Mr. Wynn's letter.

MY DEAR MORLEY, Foreign Office, Oct. 19, 1822.

The enclosed is the winding up of Ward's† long deliberation.

I have written to offer the place to Mr. Lamb,‡ for the purpose (partly to be sure of having a very good Under-Secretary, if I can get him, but principally perhaps) of opening the Frankfort mission for Lord Clanwilliam.

It was on this point of endeavouring to provide for Lord Clanwilliam as Lord Londonderry himself would have provided for him, that I 'anticipated,' as you have been told, 'the King's wishes' at our first interview.

I then only said generally that I would do my best to execute that object. At a second audience I told him, that after Binning's refusal, I had only one more offer that I thought myself bound to make of the Under-Secretaryship,

---

* Vol. i. p. 386.

† The Hon. John William Ward, afterwards Lord Dudley, to whom Mr. Canning offered the Under-Secretaryship of State.

‡ Afterwards Lord Melbourne.

and that if that also was declined, I would try to turn it to account for Lord C. This (which was certainly more than he had any right to expect) H.M. seemed to take very kindly; and not less so has he taken the notification (which Ward's hesitation made very tardy) of my having actually proposed the office to Lamb. Howard (you know) is my *précis* writer.* Your wishes in favour of Amherst will, I trust, be realized on Wednesday next.

Every endeavour was made that the nomination of Governor-General should help political arrangements at home; but every endeavour was foiled—and by whom (do you think?) by your fat friend, who so graciously volunteered to me the advice, through Lady Morley, to come in without stipulating for any one. I did so—I will not positively say in *consequence* of that advice—but I can truly say, mainly fortified by so apparently disinterested an opinion, in a course otherwise recommended. And what is the first result of this compliance? Why, that in endeavouring to open an office for Huskisson (whom your phat friend *must* have had in view), by sending the Speaker to India, and placing Wynn in the chair; *he*—not W.—but he, the phat man himself—runs restive, and swears that W. shall not move, unless he, the phat, is brought into the Cabinet in his room. I do really think this the most impudent and unreasonable pretension that I ever encountered; and put forward on the occasion, which he himself had foreseen, and (so far as depended upon him) created, it amounts to little short of treachery. It shall be long enough, if my voice goes for anything, before he shall find an opening big enough to let his phat carcase in amongst us.

So foolish too is this presumptuous conduct, as well as so unfair! For if he had behaved handsomely on this occasion, he would have secured to himself the first turn.

Of unproductive appointments, I do think A., upon the whole, the best. I feared the K. might object to it, but he did not. A.'s vote,† next to yours and Granville's, was the

* Lord Howard de Walden.

† Against the Queen's Bill of Pains and Penalties.

sin most laid to my charge—unjustly as you know. But when he had forgiven you and G. for his own fancy, it was fit that he should forgive A. for mine. Adieu.

Ever affectionately yours,

G. C.

The Duke's desire for official life evidently continued strong upon him:—

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, Dec. 29, 1825.

I return the phat duke's foolish correspondence.

It evidently dates not from India, but from Ireland. I have no doubt his letter to the King was begun on the day on which he received from Wynn the intimation that you would not, in case of Lord Wellesley's going to India, consent to the Duke of B.'s succeeding W. in Ireland.

The most curious, and in my judgment the only *serious* part of the contents of the great man's manifesto, is the disclosure with which it begins.

You may remember my astonishment at learning from Sir G. R. that Lord C. had told the Chairman that the affair had begun on the part of a member of the Cabinet. The D. having always hitherto pretended to me that his communication to me through Lord C. was the *first* step in the business; and having even thought it necessary to apologize to me for beginning with *me*, instead of with *you* or *with Wynn*.

The first paragraph of his statement gives the lie to this pretension, and sets up the Chairman's relation.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

MY DEAR L. Foreign Office, Dec. 30, 1825.

I must give up my ulterior projects of Bath and Oxford for next week, and return to town from Coombe, having my hands so full that I could not go far from town with a quiet conscience.

Would it be the same thing to you if I were to come to

Coombe on Sunday and stay Monday; or Monday and stay Tuesday, instead of to-morrow?

We shall want a quiet day to ourselves, to concert our report to the King upon the Ph. D.'s extraordinary letter.

Pray look out all your materials, as I will mine. Amongst yours, I rather hope than expect that two of mine will be found—viz., a letter from the Ph. D. to me in July, and the copy of my answer, which I am sure I sent to you, and which Stapleton swears were never returned.

Have you heard from W. in answer to your communication of Wednesday? It becomes excessively important from the coincidence of the Ph. D.'s letter to you with that of his manifesto.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

From the following letters, it appears that the Duke employed the late Sir George Warrender in the autumn of 1826, to make known to Mr. Canning his Grace's desire to be appointed Governor-General of India.

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, Nov. 16, 1826.

I must do Warrender the justice to say that he felt most deeply the awkwardness of his employment. But the Ph. D.* had led him to promise that he would communicate *a* letter to me before he had a notion what its contents would be. He imagined it to be rather the making up of some quarrel, or the doing away of some coolness, which the Ph. D. had complained of, as existing between him and me, and as having grown out of the Indian affair of last year. Upon which affair the Ph. communicated to W. *his* own letter to the K., but no other paper.

W. was therefore quite taken by surprise when the letter came to his hands, and his call upon me was rather to ask

* *Phat* duke.

what he should do with it, than with the fixed purpose of showing it to me.

I however thought it a valuable opportunity to get rid of these tricks and intrigues, which have been going on, more or less actively, ever since 1822, but never till now assumed a tangible and answerable shape.

W. is known to Ph. only as a Bucks neighbour. Ph. has cultivated him much, probably with a view to this very employment, and he even hinted at the succession to Phillimore as open to W., which W. instantly declined.

I really do not think that W. could well have done otherwise than he *did*. He *could* perhaps; but it would have required more sagacity, more presence of mind, and more decision, than one has a right to expect in any man, not in the habit of great affairs. You may be assured that he felt the matter just as you and I do, and that he was delighted with the answer, at least everything but the having to make the communication of it.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

My dear L. Foreign Office, Nov. 25, 1826.

I have let the *Ph. D.* know that I did communicate my letter to Sir G: W., to you. So, if asked, you must acknowledge having seen it.

But I incline to think, that you ought not to have been the first to mention the communication, because that would look like assigning that communication as one of the reasons of the change of footing since 1821, which, I submit, it ought not to be. I should have done very wrong to have concealed from you an overture of the sort, which was made to me. But, in telling you of it, I ought to have stipulated, and you must consider me as having done so, that the knowledge of that overture should not change your footing (whatever that might be) with the maker of the overture.

You may have observed that in my letter to Sir G: W. I stated that I did not know (and I really did not) whether

you considered yourself as having lost the D.'s connexion or not.

I am very desirous therefore not to be made an item in your account with him.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

P.S.—I ought to add that *Ph. D.* complained heavily in a long letter, which Sir G. W. showed me a few days ago, of my having shown my letter to you.

I answered this complaint in a letter of which I will send you the copy as soon as Stapleton comes to the office.

In his absence I can take no copy of this, and as I do not like to keep it till he comes, you must be so good as to return it to me to be copied.

G. C.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CHANGES IN LORD LIVERPOOL'S ADMINISTRATION—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF YORK, AND ILLNESS OF MR. CANNING—SEIZURE OF LORD LIVERPOOL—MR. CANNING APPOINTED PREMIER—RESIGNATION OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND MR. PEEL—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. PEEL AND MR. CANNING ON THAT OCCASION—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF MR. CANNING.

NOTWITHSTANDING the difficulty (occasioned by the late Duke of Buckingham) to Mr. Huskisson's admission into the Cabinet, Mr. Canning did not rest long without securing it. On the retirement of Mr. Vansittart in 1823 from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, he was succeeded by Mr. Frederick Robinson, whereby the Presidentship of the Board of Trade being vacated, the vacancy was filled up by Mr. Huskisson. These changes were very important to Mr. Canning.

The preceding pages sufficiently show that there was considerable divergency of opinion between Mr. Canning and some of his colleagues, as to the principles on which the foreign policy of the country was to be conducted; but that Mr. Canning, supported as he was, by the Premier and Mr. Peel, and afterwards by the King, succeeded in carrying his own views.

The death of the Duke of York in January, 1827, considerably weakened the party in the Cabinet, whose

opinions agreed with those of H.R.H. But notwithstanding political opinions, he exerted all his energy and displayed great ability, whilst labouring under a depressing disease, in preparing the expedition to Portugal. His personal exertions materially contributed to its speedy departure: that speed manifested a truly creditable amount of order and organization in the department over which he presided: it showed that the system, whether good or bad, which prevailed at the Horse Guards during his administration, was (in able hands) fully equal to the emergencies with which it had to deal. The expedition was despatched within a week after the orders for fitting it out had been transmitted to the Commander-in-Chief.

The army owed much to H.R.H. His mode of action, in one respect, was remarkable. I heard H.R.H. say, that he 'invariably granted an inter-'view to whomsoever asked one; and that he con-'stantly saw private soldiers and listened to what 'they had to say.'

The funeral of the Duke proved fatal to Mr. Canning. He caught a cold there, which resulted in an illness, from which he never really recovered. It took place in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, on a bitter cold night at the end of January. The Cabinet Ministers dined at Canon Long's, a brother of the late Lord Farnborough. I was with Mr. Canning, and we slept there. Lord Liverpool was unwell at Bath, drinking the waters. Lord Westmorland was expected, but had not arrived; dinner was served, and we sat down. Bets were jokingly offered by some members of the Cabinet, that Lord Westmor-

land was wandering about the cloisters; at any rate, that he had, or would make some mistake as to where he was to come. In the midst of the discussion, Lord Westmorland was heard, asking in a loud voice at the door, 'Is this *Sir Charles Long's?*' Now Sir Charles Long was Lord Farnborough, and the house was his brother's; this predicted confusion was a source of amusement to the party. It was a collar night, but Lord Westmorland had left his (Garter) collar behind him.

After dinner the Cabinet were summoned by the heralds to the Chapel. I kept with Mr. Canning, and walked with him, so I was an eye-witness of what passed. The procession was marshalled, Royal Dukes and all, on the east side of the aisle by the door where the coffin was to enter. A delay of two hours took place. No provision had been made for it; the bare stones were not even covered with matting. The cold was great, and Lord Chancellor Eldon seemed to feel it much. Mr. Canning, with his usual kindness of heart, grew uneasy about him, perhaps the more so, because he knew he was unfriendly; so to prevent the cold damp of the stones striking through his shoes, he made him lay down his cocked hat and stand upon it; when, at last, he got weary of so standing, he put him in a niche of carved work, where he was just able to stand on wood. I remember there was something very benevolent in Mr. Canning's manner, although the story afterwards excited some laughter. The whole of the funeral arrangements were of a mean description; the only part which had really a fine, solemn effect, was when the coffin, entering at the south door, was carried down the aisle,

and up the nave, the organ playing the Dead March in Saul, each side being lined with soldiers with their arms reversed, and every other one bearing a lighted torch. The machinery for lowering the coffin into the royal vault failed, and the coffin was left above ground after the ceremony was concluded.

The Cabinet Ministers then returned to Canon Long's. The Duke of Wellington had worn the collars of three orders—the Garter, the Bath, and the Golden Fleece of Spain. He was replacing them in their cases and I was looking on. Having taken off that of the Golden Fleece, he pushed it over to me, saying, 'You may like to look at that; it was the one 'worn by the Emperor Charles V., and was given to 'me as a special mark of favour by Ferdinand.'

The day after the funeral we set off for Bath, to pass two or three days with Lord Liverpool, at his particular request.

Before he left London for Bath he had been seriously ill; he then told his colleague that he meant to resign, saying, 'that, if he divested himself of the cares 'of office, he saw no reason why he might not have 'still left some ten years of enjoyable life; but that, 'if he went on, he was sure he should break down 'under it.' This Mr. Canning told me on our journey to Bath; and he amused himself with talking over what would be the consequences of this resignation, but he never contemplated any other arrangement, than that he was to succeed to the Premiership.

On our arrival at Bath, we found that Lord Liverpool had apparently derived great benefit from the waters, and was in unusual good health and spirits. We rode on horseback each day, and the dinners were

particularly pleasant; for, on the plea of amusing me (as a young man) with the stories of their early years, they went on amusing each other with recounting all sorts of fun and adventures, which were evidently quite as entertaining to the old as to the young.

During our stay they were often alone together; and Mr. Canning fully expected that Lord Liverpool would have said something more of his intended resignation; but the waters had given him a false stimulus and had restored his spirits, and when we quitted Bath, he told me that Lord Liverpool had not even alluded to the subject. From Bath we went to Mr. Huskisson's, at Eartham, where the effects of the cold caught at Windsor could no longer be resisted, and one day was passed in bed. The next we proceeded to his own residence at Brighton, where the attack grew to be an alarming one. It was an inflammation of the muscles of the whole body: this was subdued by bleeding. It then turned to intense pain, in the shape of brow ague. For many days he was too ill to write, and it became my duty to communicate with Lord Liverpool and others. I accordingly wrote daily bulletins, and great was the anxiety manifested by his lordship for the health of his friend and colleague.

On the 17th of February, the Premier was found, in the breakfast-room, senseless on the floor, with a letter in his hand; that letter was from me, giving a somewhat unfavourable account of Mr. Canning's state. Whether his regret at the intelligence which it contained at all hastened the catastrophe, it is impossible to say; there was nothing else in the letter. His valet told me that, five days after the attack, on his recovering

something like consciousness, the first word which he uttered was my name; the reading of my letter being the very act in which he lost it.*

A letter from Mr. Peel brought the account of Lord Liverpool's seizure, in the afternoon of the day in which the event occurred. Mr. Canning was much affected when the painful news was communicated to him; he knew that he was losing a friend, and one whose influence, whether in office or out, was, politically, of the greatest importance to him. Mr. Peel came to the King at the Pavilion, and the next day the two Ministers had a conference, when it was agreed that the joint advice most fitting to tender to the King would be to delay the adoption of any measures, 'since immediately to presume a fatal or a 'hopeless issue to Lord Liverpool's illness, would be 'highly indelicate; and if Lord Liverpool should 'ever come to himself sufficiently to learn what had 'passed, it would be gratifying to all parties that no 'step had been taken, or even mooted, for the dis-'posal of his succession.'

In this advice the King readily concurred. By the 22nd of February he had so far recovered as to be able to have an audience with his Majesty, who then expressed his great satisfaction at the advice which had been given.

The King indeed was quite alive to the difficulties which, in the then temper of his confidential servants, beset any settlement of the Administration, and conse-

* I have entered into these particulars, because it has been artfully *insinuated*, by something like an authority, that Lord Liverpool's illness was partly occasioned by Mr. Canning's 'plaguing' him.

quently acted on the dilatory counsel longer than was necessary or expedient; an opportunity was thus afforded for proceedings which only served to increase the difficulties. The Tory Duke of Newcastle used his privilege, as a peer, to obtain an audience of his Sovereign, and actually threatened the withdrawal of his support, and that of other peers, in the event of his Majesty thinking it right to place his Foreign Secretary at the head of his Government; 'whilst the talk which 'part of the connexions of those who belonged to a 'Government, to which, as yet, Mr. Canning belonged, 'thought themselves at liberty to hold respecting 'him,' was of a most indecorous character.

Such was the state of affairs when he went, on the 27th of March, to the Royal Lodge. On the following day, the King opened his mind to him on the subject of the then position of the Government. He gave the whole history of his political opinions, both before as well as after he became Regent, and subsequently King, especially with reference to what they had been, and then were, on the Catholic question.

He stated that on that point, even at the time of his closest connexion with Mr. Fox, his

Opinions had been against concession, and, in short, that he was decidedly opposed to emancipation. His Majesty's expressions were very strong on this subject. His Majesty expressed, in the most unequivocal terms, his satisfaction with Mr. Canning's services, and his wish to retain them for the rest of his life; but, he added, that as the Catholic question was a matter of conscience, he must take great precautions against exposing himself to the imputation of abandoning his opinions on that question, which he feared he would do if he were to select a Catholic Prime Minister. He, there-

fore, wished to retain all his present Ministers, and to fill up Lord Liverpool's place with some peer holding Lord Liverpool's opinions upon the Catholic question.

As soon as Mr. Canning learnt the state of the King's mind upon this question, he said that the first advice which, as an honest man, he was bound to tender to him was, that his Majesty should form a Government calculated to represent his own opinions. The King thought that was impossible, and cited Lord Liverpool's opinions to that effect upon the Duke of York's paper of November last. Mr. Canning observed that he did not agree in that opinion; but that it was not, however, his business to point out the mode in which such a Government might be formed, but all he could do was to lay his office at his Majesty's feet, in order that the attempt might be made. That his Majesty had a right to expect such a sacrifice from any of his servants, who had the misfortune to differ from him in opinion upon any point of such vital importance. That it was a sacrifice which he (Mr. Canning) was not only willing, but desirous, to make; and that he should carry with him, out of his Majesty's service, the most grateful recollections of all his Majesty's kindness towards him.

His Majesty then declared his sense of the impossibility of parting with Mr. Canning, and repeated his assurances, that the repugnance with which he frankly admitted he had received Mr. Canning into his service in 1822, had not only been completely effaced within a short time after their coming together, but was now changed into sentiments of satisfaction, regard, and warm affection; that the doubt and distrust which he also admitted that he had felt, of some of the first acts of his foreign policy, had given way to feelings of a directly opposite character; that Mr. Canning had placed this country in a position, with respect to Europe, in which it had never stood before; that the maintenance of the country in that situation depended on Mr. Canning's continuance in office, on the personal consideration which was placed in him by foreign Courts, and on their knowledge that his Majesty completely approved and adopted Mr. Canning's system.

Mr. Canning answered with becoming expressions of gratitude; but asked whether his Majesty wished him to speak his mind freely, otherwise he had sufficiently discharged his duty in advising his Majesty to form an exclusively anti-Catholic Government.

His Majesty repeated that that was impossible, and desired Mr. Canning to go on.

Mr. Canning then said, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, he would speak without reserve. He was sure, he said, his Majesty was too just not to allow that, if there was conscience on his Majesty's part, there was likewise conscience and point of honour on his part, with respect to this unhappy question; and that, while Mr. Canning abstained, as was his duty, from attempting to force his Majesty's conscience, it would be impossible for him, on the other hand, to alter, in the slightest degree, the footing on which he had hitherto stood with respect to the Catholic question, since the year 1812, when first he took part in Parliament in its favour, without disgracing himself, and rendering himself altogether useless. His Majesty must permit him to say, that it was not just to change that footing without previous warning, and that it was obviously unjust to do so without giving each Minister, who had entered his service upon the faith that the footing was unchanged, permission to retire without incurring his Majesty's displeasure; that if the proposition made to Mr. Canning was either to conform to a new footing on this subject, or retire, he should not complain. The change might be unexpected, but circumstances might have arisen to justify it. But his Majesty must not be offended at Mr. Canning's saying, that there was something not only unjust, but almost preposterous, in saying to a Minister, There is a particular measure which you disapprove, but which I am determined to carry into effect. I cannot find Ministers to do this for me without your help; and, therefore, I expect of you, who are adverse to this measure, to remain in my Government, in order to enable your colleagues to defeat your own opinions.

Mr. Canning could only say that, if he remained in the Government, it must be to act as he had hitherto acted

upon the Catholic question, whenever the discussion of it occurred.

That most happy should he be, if, by any fair management or reasonable compromise, he could contrive to spare his Majesty's feelings, or, to use a word which his Majesty had employed, to *protect* him from the vexation which he had experienced in the annual agitation of this painful question; but that, in order to do this, Mr. Canning must be free as air with respect to the question; that he could give his Majesty no pledges of any kind respecting it; for, that, if upon being questioned in the House of Commons, as Mr. Canning would assuredly be, whether he had given any such pledges, he could not answer in the negative as frankly and unqualifiedly as he had done on former occasions, all his power with respect to the management of that measure would be gone.

His Majesty graciously admitted the reasonableness of this view of the subject; but then, reverting to his own feeling upon the Catholic question, asked what he should be able to say to those, who relied upon his Majesty's firmness for the maintenance of the Protestant cause, if he were to name what would be called a Catholic Prime Minister.

Mr. Canning took the liberty of answering that question by another. How should he be able to show his face to those to whom, in and out of Parliament, he had always asserted (because he always believed) that the Catholic question was an open question on which the members of the Government were free to act according to their opinions, without entailing any disadvantageous consequence upon themselves, if he should allow it to be proved in his person, that those whose sentiments were favourable to the Roman Catholics were to be excluded solely on account of those sentiments, as much as the Catholics, from the hightest elevations in the State and from the greatest objects of ambition?

He could not, therefore, consent that, in his person, such a principle should be established; and he felt bound honestly to tell his Majesty, in plain terms, that the substantive power of First Minister he must have, and what is more,

must be known to have, or he must beg leave to be allowed to retire from a situation which he could not longer fill, either with satisfaction to himself or with benefit to the King's service.*

The result of this conversation is embodied in the following 'corrected minute':—

Minute of what was said to me by the King at the Royal Lodge, March 28, 1827. Read by me to his Majesty March 29, and corrected in his Majesty's presence.

G. C.

FOR THE CABINET,

That his Majesty is desirous of retaining all his present servants in the stations which they at present fill; placing at their head, in the station vacated by Lord Liverpool, some peer professing opinions, upon whom his Majesty's confidential servants may agree, of the same principles as Lord Liverpool.

The succeeding letter to the King details the course taken with respect to this minute:—

Foreign Office, March 31, 1827.

Mr. Canning presents his most humble duty to your Majesty, and, as the clearest method of explaining to your Majesty the manner in which he has acted upon your Majesty's gracious message, received by him yesterday evening, through Mr. Peel, humbly takes the liberty of transmitting to your Majesty the copy of a paper which he has just read to the Cabinet:—

(*Copy.*)

'Mr. Canning received on Thursday his Majesty's commands to communicate to the Cabinet a memorandum (written in his Majesty's presence) of his Majesty's wishes in reference to the arrangement of the Administration.

'Mr. Canning, in consequence, summoned the Cabinet for to-day.

* This paper was dictated to me by Mr. Canning.

'Yesterday evening Mr. Canning received a verbal mes-
'sage from his Majesty, through Mr. Peel, leaving to Mr.
'Canning's *discretion* to make, or to withhold the prescribed
'communication.

'In the exercise of this discretion Mr. Canning feels
'great difficulty, especially as he had taken the liberty
'of humbly stating to his Majesty the objections which
'he individually felt both to the form and to the sub-
'stance of the communication; and as he might be ex-
'posed to blame therefore alike, either for keeping it back,
'on the one hand, or for bringing it forward unnecessarily,
'on the other.

'In this state of things Mr. Canning can only decide to
'withhold the communication for the present, and humbly
'to request his Majesty's definitive pleasure thereupon.

'Mr. Peel will state to the Cabinet that his opinion con-
'curs with Mr. Canning's (and has been, like his, stated to
'his Majesty) of the inexpediency of referring the point to
'which the memorandum relates, to the collective opinion
'of the Cabinet.'

The Cabinet were perfectly satisfied with this explanation, and Mr. Canning has only most humbly to solicit your Majesty's further commands, if your Majesty should still wish the intended communication to take place.

Mr. Canning cannot conclude without again taking the liberty of most humbly pressing upon your Majesty the expediency strongly felt by your Majesty's servants, in common with Parliament, of an early termination of the present embarrassing state of the Government.

The King allowed the proposal contained in the minute to drop.

Between the 31st of March and 6th of April, Mr. Canning had no communication with the King on the subject of the Cabinet arrangements; but he had frequent conferences with the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, whose conduct appeared to be consis-

tent and honourable; he had made up his mind to resign, if an individual favourable to the Roman Catholics should be placed at the head of the Government; and as soon as he found that Mr. Canning would not yield this point, he made known his intention. His professions, too, of 'respect and regard' were unbounded. 'It is quite impossible,' wrote Mr. Canning, 'to do sufficient justice to his frankness and 'straightforwardness, and to feelings for which I had 'not before given him credit, but which I hope I 'know how to value and return.'

On the 3rd of April the Duke of Wellington had a long conversation with Mr. Canning, who gave to his Grace 'the fullest details of what passed at his audience with his Majesty at Windsor.' This interview is thus described to Sir William Knighton:— 'Everything that was in doubt between us has been 'cleared up satisfactorily, and we parted, as you 'would have wished, all being left well.'

On the 4th April, the Duke of Wellington proposed to Mr. Canning, that he should again see Mr. Peel. The former wrote to the latter accordingly, and, on the day after, they met.

(*Secret and Confidential.*)

Foreign Office, April 5, 1827,
Six P.M.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have had another long talk with P., than which nothing could be more satisfactory as to manner and feeling.

But the practical point, as to his own decision, remains just where it was; and I am quite confident will remain so, until I can speak to him positively, not hypothetically.

I have also had a few more words with the Duke, but equally without any advance.

My belief is, that he (the Duke), and, perhaps, P. too, hoped the explanation between me and the D. would end in *my* begging *him* to take the Government. I mention this, because it is contrary to the *belief* which I had before stated to you, that the D. never thought of himself for that post. Further light has changed that belief entirely.

Of this be assured, that we shall never advance one step till the K. fixes, and is known to have fixed, his choice, and to have given over all details to *the* individual so chosen.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

The King came to town on the 5th, and gave Mr. Canning an audience on the 6th, but no progress was made. On the 9th, by the King's command, he again saw Mr. Peel, who came for the purpose of stating 'the name of an individual whose appoint-'ment as Premier Mr. Peel conceived likely to solve 'all difficulties.' That individual was the Duke of Wellington. By what process of reasoning Mr. Peel brought himself to imagine that the Duke, who for years had been combating in the Cabinet Mr. Canning's system of foreign policy, would have been accepted by him as his chief, it is impossible to divine; but, that such was his actual belief, his manner, when he revealed the name, clearly indicated. Of course it afforded no such solution as Mr. Peel anticipated.

The King had now done all that he thought was required of him to give effect to his own anti-Romanist opinions. From the outset, there can be no reasonable doubt, that he had made up his mind not to part with Mr. Canning. His Majesty would have been glad to have kept him, on his own terms; but

if that were impossible, he always meant to retain him.

On the next day, the 10th, his Majesty gave his royal commands to Mr. Canning, to prepare 'with as 'little delay as possible a plan for the reconstruction 'of the Administration.'

The details of what passed with the members of the then existing Cabinet, in giving effect to the King's command, are given fully in the *Political Life*, vol. iii. chap. xviii.

But in that account there is no mention made of the letters which passed between Mr. Canning and Mr. Peel on the subject of the retirement of the latter. Five days after the King had arrived at his decision, Mr. Peel received the following letter from the new Premier.

(*Private.*)

MY DEAR PEEL, Foreign Office, April 15, 1827.

I have been interrupted twenty times in my attempts to finish a letter to you, which I began some days ago: and events have in the meantime followed each other so rapidly, that great part of what I had written, has become obsolete or unnecessary. I will therefore now confine myself to the repetition of what I have already expressed to you—my deep and sincere regret at the great public misfortune, and the sincere individual loss to myself, of your retirement from office. The frankness and generosity with which you have defined and limited the motives that dictate your retirement, afford to my regret all the alleviations of which it is susceptible. It is a pride, as well as a comfort to me, to know that, but for the point of honour, which forbids your serving in any Government, from the head of which you differ on the Catholic question, you would willingly have continued to sit by my side in the House of Commons; and to share with me the defence of all those other great questions, and

of all those principles of external and internal policy—with respect to *all* of which (with the single exception of that *one* question) we agree as entirely and cordially as it is possible for any two individuals to agree in the concerns of public life.

Upon the point of honour, on which you have acted, it is not for me to give an opinion. But if it was good on one side, unquestionably it could not but be good on the other.

I could not be expected to allow the opinion which *I* hold on the Catholic question, to operate as a disqualification against me for a succession not otherwise disputed.

In truth, so far as you and I are concerned, the fault is in circumstances which neither of us could control, not in ourselves. I assure you as solemnly on my part as I believe implicitly on yours, that there is not a *shade* of personal estrangement in our official separation. Neither is it any fault of mine, that this separation is caused by your retirement rather than by mine. The only advice which I had tendered to his Majesty up to the period at which his Majesty was pleased to lay his commands upon me to form an Administration, was that his Majesty should endeavour to form one *wholly* composed of persons thinking with his Majesty (and with you) upon the question on which we unfortunately differ—an advice involving obviously my own exclusion. As to the alleged impossibility of acting on this advice, I cannot presume to judge. I felt it to be my duty to offer the opportunity of doing so, by putting myself voluntarily out of the way.

Adieu, my dear Peel. I will relieve you as soon as I can from the labours of your office, which is the one that I find it the most difficult to fill—no wonder, after such a predecessor.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

The reader will see how closely this language, at the moment of official separation, tallies with that employed to Sir William Knighton, in the interview at Gloucester Lodge.

To this letter Mr. Peel replied as follows:—

MY DEAR CANNING, Whitehall, April 17, 1827.

The letter which I have received from you gives me the opportunity of recording, and indeed makes it necessary that I should record, the grounds on which I felt myself compelled to decline being a member of the Administration over which you are to preside as Prime Minister. I do not consider that my objections to remain in office resolve themselves merely into a point of honour. The grounds on which I decline office are public grounds—clear and intelligible, I think, to every man who has marked the course which I have pursued in Parliament on the Catholic question, and who understands the nature and the functions of the office which I have filled.

For the period of eleven years I have been connected with the Administration over which Lord Liverpool presided. Six of those years I was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and for the remaining five, Secretary of State for the Home Department. In each office I was in immediate contact with Irish affairs, and deeply responsible for their administration. During the whole of that period—indeed, during the whole of my public career—I have taken a very active and prominent part in opposition to the Catholic claims; concurring in opinion, and acting in unison with the head of the Government of which I was a member. Can I see the whole influence and authority of the office of Prime Minister transferred from Lord Liverpool to you, without a conviction that the sanguine hopes of the Roman Catholics will be excited, and that the Catholic question will be practically and materially affected by the change?

It is not merely that you differ from Lord Liverpool on the Catholic question. It is the extent of the difference which must be regarded. It is that the opinions avowed by Lord Liverpool on the last occasion on which he had an opportunity of avowing them, must be compared with those opinions which you have uniformly and so powerfully enforced.

The transfer of the influence of Prime Minister from Lord Liverpool to you, is the transfer of that influence from the most powerful opponent to the most powerful advocate of the Catholic claims.

If I were to be a party to this arrangement by accepting office under it, I should (always bearing in mind the peculiar situation in which I am placed) be subject to great misconstruction, and, in fact, should be lending myself to the advancement of a cause which, under a different aspect of political affairs, I had uniformly and strenuously resisted.

My position as Minister for the Home Department—responsible in that capacity for the administration of Irish affairs—has long been one of considerable difficulty, and embarrassment.

I have been the only Minister of the Crown—with a seat in the House of Commons—taking a part in opposition to the Catholic claims, differing from all my colleagues who are members of the branch of the Legislature of which I am a member, on a question peculiarly affecting Ireland; and on the issue of which, on the last occasion on which it was discussed, depended my own relation to the Government.

Whilst Lord Liverpool was head of the Government, I found material relief and assistance, because my opinions on that question (the only question on which I differed from my colleagues) were in concurrence with his. Is it not obvious that my efficiency and authority as a servant of the Crown, must be materially impaired by an arrangement which transfers the highest and most powerful office from him, with whom I entirely concurred, to you from whom it is my misfortune, in that case, to differ? Such are the grounds on which most reluctantly, but without hesitation, I felt myself compelled to relinquish office. Had your opinions on the Catholic question been in accordance with those of Lord Liverpool, I should have been perfectly willing to place my humble services at your disposal, and to co-operate with you, in the conduct of public business,

with the same cordiality and good-will with which I have hitherto acted in concert with you on all points, save the one which now compels our separation.

That separation has caused me the deepest regret—regret which would be still more embittered, if I were not conscious that I had done everything in my power to prevent the disunion which has taken place—everything, at least, consistent with a sense of public duty and the maintenance of my character as a public man.

Ever, my dear Canning,
Most sincerely yours,
ROBERT PEEL.

The Right Honourable George Canning, &c. &c.

These two letters are strongly characteristic of the two statesmen. The one warm and open—the other over-cautious—and, as events proved, wanting in foresight. It remains unexplained how Mr. Peel could conscientiously have written this parting letter, and, within two years from the date of it, have been the Minister to carry out, in their broadest extent, the principles which he then condemned. His posthumous autobiography throws no light upon this, the part of his political career, which the most stands in need of explanation. Does his colleague, Mr. Wynn, throw any light upon it, when he thus writes to the Duke of Buckingham so far back as the 15th of May, 1822, four months before Lord Londonderry's death?

Peel has lately taken a much bolder and decided course both in Parliament and Cabinet, and I have little doubt means to run for the lead in the House of Commons. It appears to me very probable that his object is to break up the Government, in the expectation that it will be impossible for the Opposition to substitute anything that can stand three months, and that he may then mould and form it

at his pleasure. He has himself spoken to me of the advantage which would result from our retiring, and the certainty that we must return to power in three months. *Does he think that that period would be sufficient to pass the Catholic question ?**

Whatever were the motives that influenced Mr. Peel at this crisis to retire, the colleague whom he abandoned nevertheless entertained towards him sentiments of friendship and respect. No suspicion ever crossed his mind that there was any want of sincerity in the reasons assigned by him for his retirement. He had never stood, as a rival, in Mr. Canning's path, who always looked to him as his successor. More than once he said to me:—

I grieve at Peel's decision; had we only gone on together for a short time, my succession must have fallen to him. My strength cannot hold out in laborious office for more than three, perhaps four, years. My anxious hope is that God may give me strength to settle certain questions at home, and to calm down affairs abroad, so as to give to the world that stability, which is yet much imperilled.

From the date of Mr. Peel's letter to the period of the new Premier's death, they had little personal intercourse. Mr. Peel's conduct in the House of Commons could neither be praised, as generous, nor yet be condemned, as ungenerous; on the whole, it was disappointing; for the 'teasing' opposition which was offered by his personal friends, and, on one occasion, by himself, was such as he ought not to have permitted in others, or been betrayed into himself. Still there was no personal estrangement: the last time that they met was in Westminster Hall, on the 2nd of July, a few days before the prorogation. Mr. Canning

* *Memoirs of the Court of George IV.* vol. i. p. 326.

was walking with me to the House, from whence Mr. Peel was returning. They shook hands; and, after a few friendly words, the former turned round, and Mr. Peel offering his arm, we walked up and down the Hall for a quarter of an hour, or more, their manner and conversation being marked by mutual cordiality and good-will.

Mr. Peel's subsequent conduct was inexplicable. When it was known that Mr. Canning was dying, he never sent to inquire after him. He did not attend the funeral, nor did he subscribe to the monument of a man, in eulogy of whom, on more than one occasion, he afterwards publicly spoke. Mr. Peel's life was an enigma.

Mr. Canning never saw the Duke of Wellington to converse with him after his resignation. Communications, however, passed between them. He wrote to the Duke a long letter,* in reply to his Grace's speech in the House of Lords, explaining the grounds of his retirement, to which the Duke sent a reply.† Both these letters are given *in extenso* in the *Political Life*, chapter xix. vol. iii.

At the latter end of May the following correspondence took place:—

(*Private.*)

Downing Street, May 21, 1827,
Ten P.M.

My dear Duke of Wellington,

I have abstained from replying to your answer to my letter of the 6th, lest our correspondence should degenerate into controversy, which would have been entirely contrary to my intention.

The contents of my other letter of this date will, I trust,

* May 3, 1827. † May 6, 1827.

render any continuance of that correspondence altogether unnecessary.

Believe me, my dear Duke of Wellington,
Very sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

His Grace the Duke of Wellington.

Downing Street, May 21, 1827,
Ten P.M.

MY DEAR DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

It is with great pleasure that I execute the King's commands in transmitting to you the enclosed letter addressed to you by his Majesty.

Believe me, my dear Duke of Wellington,
Very sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

(*Enclosure.*)

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I learn from my Government, as well as from other quarters, that you have obligingly expressed your readiness to afford your advice, if required, upon any matters of military importance or detail that might occur.

These circumstances renew in me those feelings towards you, which God knows (as you must know) I have so long and so sincerely felt, and I hope on all occasions proved; at least, it was always my intention so to do.

I cannot refrain, therefore, from acquainting you that the command of *the army* is still open, and if you choose to recall that resignation, which it grieved me so much to receive, you have my sincere permission to do so.

Your sincere Friend, G. R.

St. James's Palace, May 21st, 1827.

Field-Marshal Duke of Wellington, K.G.

London, May 22, 1827.

Your Majesty's most gracious letter of yesterday reached me last night, and I beg leave to return your Majesty my most grateful acknowledgments for your kindness.

I cannot claim the merit of having had any communication of any description with your Majesty's Government since I quitted office. I did state, both to Lord Anglesey and to

Sir Herbert Taylor, that I should be most happy to render to each of them every assistance in my power, to enable them to carry on the duties of their several offices; and to the latter in particular I have since written twice, in consequence of reports which had reached me of the state of affairs in Portugal—inducing me to believe that it was desirable that your Majesty's forces in that country should be collected in one body, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Lisbon.

I have served the late King and your Majesty for forty-two years, thirty-five of which, either in the field against the enemy in the command of your Majesty's armies abroad, particularly for six years in the Peninsula, or in active political office; and even if I had not been, as I was, a party to the advice given to your Majesty to send a body of troops to Portugal, the anxiety which I feel for the honour of your Majesty's arms, and the gratitude which I owe to your Majesty for your Majesty's most gracious favour and kindness towards me, would have induced me to state my opinion to that officer who was principally confided in by your Majesty in military affairs, when it appeared to me that the position of your Majesty's troops was becoming critical.

I am delighted that my doing so has attracted your Majesty's favourable notice; but I assure your Majesty that I had not a notion that the existence of these letters would ever be made known to your Majesty, still less did I intend in writing them to manifest any desire to withdraw my resignation of the office of Commander-in-Chief.

Your Majesty has been pleased to observe that the command of the army is still open, and that if I choose to recall my resignation of that command, I have your Majesty's permission to do so.

I earnestly hope that your Majesty will have the goodness to refer to the reasons which I stated to your Majesty on the 12th April, and more fully to your Majesty's Minister on the 6th May, as having imposed upon me the painful necessity of offering to your Majesty my resignation of the command of your Majesty's forces.

I humbly entreat your Majesty to bear in mind that the reasons still continue in force; and were I, under such cir-

cumstances, to recall my resignation, I should by that act admit that I had not been justified in retiring; and I should disable myself from rendering that useful service to your Majesty, which it would be, as it ever has been, the pride of my life to render.

All of which, together with the expression of my gratitude for the kind sentiments contained in your Majesty's letter to me, are submitted to your Majesty by your Majesty's most devoted subject,

WELLINGTON.

MY DEAR MR. CANNING, London, May 22, 1827.

I received when I returned home last night your two letters of ten P.M., and I now enclose a letter that I have addressed to the King in answer to that which his Majesty was most graciously pleased to write to me.

I beg to assure you that nothing I desire so much as to avoid all controversial correspondence, and it shall not be renewed by me.

Ever, my dear Mr. Canning,
Yours most sincerely,

The Right Hon. George Canning. WELLINGTON.

(*Private.*)

Downing Street, May 28, 1827,
Three P.M.

Mr. Canning presents his most humble and affectionate duty to your Majesty, and humbly requests your Majesty's indulgence if he omits to wait upon your Majesty to-day; being under the necessity of attending in his place in the House of Commons soon after four o'clock.

Mr. Canning has nothing new to report to your Majesty on the subject of last night's conversation. He has not seen nor heard from Lord Anglesey, and (he confesses) he is rather induced to hope that it may be some time before he does so.

The language held by the Duke of Wellington's adherents (as reported to Mr. Canning) is anything but conciliatory, and if the Duke's own feelings are indeed of that nature, it

surely is not too much to expect, that, after the gracious and condescending overture spontaneously made by your Majesty, and his rejection of it, the next advance should come from the Duke of Wellington's side.

Of this offer there was no renewal. All that concerned the Duke is contained in two letters: one from the King, the other the answer.

(*Private.*)

DEAR MR. CANNING,

I delay not a moment in acquainting you with a circumstance that has just occurred very unexpectedly to me—a visit from the Duke of Wellington. I can only attribute this visit to its being the anniversary of my coronation. Our interview was not long, and our conversation for the most part was on general topics. Of course it was impossible here and there, occasionally, not to have some reference to matters which have recently occurred. I found the Duke extremely temperate, but I could easily perceive, from little expressions which now and then dropped, that the most assiduous pains have been taken, and are still actively employed, to give the strongest jaundiced complexion to the past, as well as the present state of things, and to keep up, if not to widen as much as malice and wickedness can contrive it, the breach which exists between him and my Government. I sincerely hope that you are rapidly recovering from the odious lumbago.

Believe me always,
Your sincere friend,

Royal Lodge,
Thursday, July 19th, Half-past Two P.M., 1827. G. R.

(*Private.*)

Downing Street, July 20, 1827.

Mr. Canning presents his most humble duty to your Majesty, and acknowledges, with affectionate regard, your Majesty's prompt and gracious condescension in acquainting Mr. Canning with the unexpected circumstance of the Duke of Wellington's visit to the Royal Lodge.

Mr. Canning trusts that he need not assure your Majesty how sincerely he should have rejoiced if the sentiments which prompted this voluntary act of dutiful attention to your Majesty on the part of the Duke of Wellington, had also induced him to go to the farther length of reconsidering his rejection of your Majesty's late gracious overture; and of *offering* in his turn to accede to the arrangement then proposed to him, by resuming the command of the army.

Mr. Canning is not aware of any just impediment that ought, at the present moment, to stand in the way of that resumption.

But it is impossible not to fear that such impediments may arise hereafter.

Mr. Canning has studiously forborne hitherto from those public explanations which he feels to be due to himself, and which are due (if he may presume to say so) to your Majesty. Such forbearance, however, must have its limits.

The Duke of Wellington's new connexions may, if not by direct stipulation, by a sort of tacit understanding, hamper the Duke of Wellington's freedom of acting *for himself*, at a future time, when he perhaps may be more willing to do so, than at present.

But these are difficulties which it is for the Duke of Wellington himself to estimate, and to prevent, if he thinks it worth while to do so. He will never do so if he listens to his present advisers.

Mr. Canning is deeply sensible of your Majesty's kind concern for his health. He has happily left his bed for the first time to-day, and is ordered to go this afternoon to Chiswick (which the Duke of Devonshire has been kind enough to lend him).

After a few days of quiet there, he will, with your Majesty's kind permission, pay his respects to your Majesty some morning towards the end of next week.

Mr. Canning's health sufficiently improved to enable him to pay the visit promised to the King in this letter. Their final interview took place on the 30th of July.

On the 31st, he went to the Foreign Office for the last time, and returned to Chiswick in the afternoon. In eight days he was no more!

The following are extracts from a diary made by me at the time during his last illness:—

July 31, 1827.—I arrived at Chiswick about six; he was gone to dress, and came out in the garden about half-past, where were Lord and Lady Carlisle and Lord Dudley.* He appeared very languid, complained to me of weakness, and I thought looked dreadfully ill. In the course of the evening, having thrown himself back on the sofa, I observed he could hardly get up. I offered help, but he declined.

August 1.—Found him in bed with a blister at twelve; he looked very ill, but was very cheerful. He dictated to me the remainder of a paper which he had begun on the affairs of Portugal. He continued quiet for the rest of the day. He said more than once that he thought the blister had done him good, but he could hardly tell whether the pain which he yet felt was from the blister, or the original pain. In the evening he expressed great hopes that the blister had relieved him.

August 2.—Found him very cheerful, but still suffering from pain in the side. Sir W. Knighton called, and was so struck with his state, that Dr. Holland and Dr. Farre were sent for. Sir William thought there were bad symptoms, but did not apprehend any sudden or immediate danger.

After Sir William's departure, Mr. Herries* came by appointment on business. He remained three hours. After his departure, Mr. Canning said to me, 'I am quite tired; I have 'had three hours of the most tiresome business that I ever 'recollect to have gone through. Not that Mr. Herries was 'in fault, for nothing could be better and clearer than the 'way in which he went through it, but from the nature of the 'business.' He then proposed to me to get the paper on Portugal, which he had finished on the preceding day, to read over; but I persuaded him to try and go to sleep instead.

* Secretary of the Treasury.

He replied, 'Well, perhaps you are right; I will do so.' He then signed two Treasury warrants—the last occasion on which he ever signed his name—and he then turned round to go to sleep. I left him at 5. At a quarter-past 6 he was seized with violent agonies in his side. The physicians met at 7, and bled him.

August 3.—The physicians arrived at 12. The pain still continued—the bleeding had not relieved him—he was declared to be in great and imminent danger. Sir Matthew Tierney, who had seen him through his recent illness at Brighton, was sent for. He passed the rest of the day in dozing and paroxysms of pain. The physicians slept in the house.

* * * *

August 4.—He passed a good night, and was better; a slight impression had been made on the inflammatory symptoms. Towards night, however, he grew much worse. I was asked this evening by his physicians whether I knew of anything in his public or private affairs which would render it advisable to warn him of his danger. I said, I did not; but expressed my strong opinion, from my knowledge of him, that he would wish not to be kept in ignorance of his state. There was a fear, however, that making known to him his danger might increase it; so nothing was said to him that night.

August 5 (Sunday).—He had passed a good night; but the physicians, when they met, did not think him really better. They proposed to issue a bulletin, announcing his severe illness. Went to town to see the Chancellor about issuing the bulletin. It was decided to publish it without delay. In the forenoon he proposed that his daughter should read the prayers to him, but he began to wander, and it was not done. On my return he asked for me, and when I said that I hoped that he was better; he said, 'Yes, 'very little; but if all the pain which I have suffered 'throughout my life were collected together, it would not 'amount to the one-hundredth part of the pain which I have 'suffered these last three days.' I was much struck with his altered appearance. He then wandered in his conversation, and sank into a doze.

* * * *

When the physicians saw him this evening he was in pain, and exclaimed, 'My God! my God!' Dr. Farre observed, 'You do right, Sir, to call upon your God. I hope 'that you pray to him yourself in secret.' 'I do, I do,' was his answer. And, 'You ask,' added the Doctor, 'for mercy 'and salvation, through the merits of your Redeemer?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I do, through the merits of Jesus Christ.' The Doctor then asked if he had anything to say about his country; but it was feared that the question might excite him, and the subject was dropped.

* * * *

In the course of the evening he said to Sir W. Knighton, 'This may be hard upon me, but it is still harder upon the King.'

August 6.—He had sleep at night, and the pain was diminished. The physicians, however, entertained no hope. In the course of the day he gave me different instructions, but they were not coherent.

* * * *

August 7.—At four in the morning he became much worse, and we all thought that he would not again recover consciousness; but about seven he began to rally, and became more collected, and continued so till about four in the afternoon, when bad symptoms returned.

* * * *

August 8.—Went to his room at three in the morning; he was quite unconscious. . . . . Sir M. Tierney felt his pulse, thought for a second that he was gone, but he still breathed. In a few minutes there ceased to be any signs of breathing. He passed away so quietly that the exact moment could not be ascertained, but it was between twelve and ten minutes before four.

At the early hour of his death, crowds (which subsequently amounted to between three and four thousand persons) had congregated outside the lodge at Chiswick. Sorrow, deep and universal, fell upon them when the fatal termination became known. On the day of the funeral, the whole way from Downing

Street to the Abbey was lined with spectators, and the large space in front of the great western door was densely covered with people. The short duration of his illness had prevented men's minds being prepared for the worst. He had just attained the highest object of a subject's ambition, and great results were expected; but it pleased God to bring his days suddenly to an end. The hopes of millions were buried in his grave: many and bitter were the tears of those numerous friends and admirers who had come from all parts to witness the sad ceremony. The funeral was a private one; there was no choral service; the solemn silence was more impressive than the organ's peal.

> The plain and decent homage best defined
> The simple tenor of his mighty mind.

There are two monuments erected to his memory. A statue, in bronze, by Westmacott, opposite New Palace Yard; and a marble statue, by Chantrey, in Westminster Abbey, near his grave. The head of each is a strong likeness. At the back of Chantrey's statue, the sculptor has engraved these words, 'Thus Canning stood.' On the pedestal of the bronze statue, there is simply 'George Canning.' On that in the Abbey, there is an elaborate inscription.

For the latter, I prepared at the time the following inscription; but there were many reasons why I never submitted it to the Committee for their adoption. Now, however, that one-and-thirty years have elapsed since it was written, it seems to me that I could not pen a truer or more just epitome of his public career:—

GEORGE CANNING,

BORN APRIL 11, 1770. DIED AUGUST 8, 1827.

By the happy union of transcendent genius with inflexible integrity,
He raised himself to the highest offices in the State.
The contest between the rival spirits of unlimited Monarchy and unlimited Democracy,
Was the leading feature of his time.
On the European Continent each in its turn prevailed, with its own peculiar mischief;
The whirlwind of Revolution in France establishing anarchy and terror;
The meddling Oppression of the Holy Alliance generating universal discontent.
With a consistency not the less stedfastly adhered to, because it was studiously misrepresented,
GEORGE CANNING
Stood forth the undaunted and uncompromising opponent of these two spirits of evil.
When Jacobinism raged, he laid bare its horrors,
And saved his Country from being deluded by its advocates.
When the Constitution was in peril from open foes and insidious friends,
He repulsed the assaults of the one, and quashed the experiments of the other.
A judicious supporter of true liberty, he consolidated the independence of the New World:
By dissolving the Holy Alliance he restored national freedom to the Old.
Upholding, without bigotry, established institutions,
He was the first to remedy any practical grievance. By the safe
Liberality of his measures, he gave confidence to the loyal, and amongst the disaffected diffused content.
Fearless in the midst of danger, when Napoleon threatened
The independent existence of Britain, he sustained by his
Manly eloquence the sinking courage of his Country,
And pointed out the path to those victories with which it pleased
Almighty God ultimately to crown her efforts.
Avowedly making the interest of England the grand object of his policy,
He disarmed the envy of surrounding Nations, by teaching them to look to British prosperity as the best security for their own.
He had the rare satisfaction of receiving, whilst he yet lived, that homage from his Opponents, which is too often but the posthumous reward of genuine Patriotism.
He died deeply lamented by Foreign Nations,
But still more regretted by his own.

APPENDIX.

THE following letters, or extracts from letters, relate to matters too curious or too important to be omitted. It has been impossible to find a fit place for them in the preceding chapters.

No. 1.—Extract. Dictating to three Secretaries at the same time.

Whilst staying at Mr. Charles Ellis's, at Seaford, in 1825, Mr. Canning, having left the breakfast-room, one of his staff mentioned that Napoleon was in the habit of dictating to three secretaries at once. Some of the party expressed strong doubts as to the possibility of such an effort of the mind.

In a few minutes his usual staff left the breakfast-room for the working-room. It was *impossible* that Mr. Canning could have heard what had just passed. But curiously enough that very morning he desired first one, then another, and then a third of his secretaries to '*crook* a sheet of paper,' by which he meant double it in two; and he proceeded to dictate three long despatches, and kept each of us writing as fast as we could write. His doing so was a very curious coincidence, being unprecedented, but it proved the possibility to the doubters.

No. 2.—Extract. MR. CANNING *to* LORD LIVERPOOL.

Lord Londonderry's Friends.

Oct. 24, 1824.

But when I speak of introducing a friend into employment I mean such an introduction as Lord Castlereagh's of such a friend as Lord Clancarty, into the embassy at the Hague. Such as *that*, that with the assurance of the K. and the D. of Wellington that it had been Lord Castlereagh's intention, I executed for him in nominating Lord Clanwilliam to Berlin. . . .

I had two vacancies soon after my taking the Seals—one, Berlin, I have mentioned; for the other, Vienna, I had a full right to prefer Granville to Henry Wellesley; but I was told that Lord Lon-

donderry had designed H. Wellesley for the post, and I gave it according to the reported designation.

Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald went to Stockholm, a bequest also of my predecessor.

No. 3.—Precedency of Royalties and Ambassadors.

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, July 8, 1825.

Our Cabinets began to-day; and I got through the most pressing of your cases, that of the Prince of Salerno; but not so as to be able to send you a public instruction upon it to-day—a matter of this nature must be laid before the King, not merely as question of form, but as one on which his Majesty is really to exercise his individual judgment.

I must say I think this trick of the Court of France very discreditable. They never thought of such a rule while the Duke of Kent, or of Cumberland, or of Cambridge, were at Paris, each *incognito* it is true; but *incognito, because* it was well known that the ambassadors would not yield them precedency; and now, when the object is to set up a Bourbon Prince, there is a pretence of laying down a general rule, while it is evidently one dictated only on the spur of the particular occasion. The King, to do him justice, when I mentioned to his Majesty the refusal of Lieven and Polignac to give the *pas* to the D. of Brunswick, said that the ambassadors were in the right. I think his Majesty cannot have had present to his mind the pretensions of the Emperor of Russia, set forth in the protocol of 1823, of which I was wholly ignorant. And I know not what he will think of this other innovation, by virtue of which (joined with the former), while Lord Strangford would be following the heels of the Duke of Oldenburgh, or of Weimar, at St. Petersburgh, and Lieven would be going before the Duke of Brunswick in London, Prince Paul of Wirtemburg would be taking place of you, and the King's son-in-law Prince Leopold walking behind Pozzo at Paris.

If I can help it, the King shall not submit to such indignities.

I have no objection to your giving the *pas* to the Prince of Salerno *this time*, but it must be with a distinct understanding, recorded in the protocol, that the whole subject must be revived and settled on equal and reciprocal principles; and that, if the Emperor of Russia and the King of France are to make exceptions, at their pleasure, to the general and (as it was understood) established regulation, that ambassadors should have precedency over all but crowned heads (to which regulation H. M. was perfectly content to conform, and which, even now, he prefers as the simplest and least inconvenient system), his Majesty is not, on his part, to be bound by the fancies of Russia and France, without taking the like liberty to establish at his own Court what new rules he may think proper.

In this sense probably your instruction will be, and while you lackey the Prince of Salerno, you will have to let Polignac know that when he returns to London, he may find the Duke of Brunswick pushing out of the room before his Excellency. He pushes so little at present (being, as you may suppose, not a little nettled at the refusal of the ambassadors to yield the *pas*) that at Gloucester Lodge on Wednesday, Lord —— marched out to dinner before him.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

No. 4.—*Extract. Cantanker and Tricky. To* SIR CHARLES BAGOT.

Seaford, Nov. 1, 1825.

You will perceive that F. is *cantankerous*. I told you (I think) some time ago that he is also tricky. No man has a right to be both. In trickery, nothing so much becomes a man as humility. Straightforwardness is the only excuse for *cantanker*.

No. 5.—*Cuba.*

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Dec. 26, 1825.

If Yankee Browne shall communicate with you, as I hope he will, upon his late instructions respecting Cuba, before he acts upon them with Damas, pray persuade him to execute them by *showing* the despatch which he has received, or reading it *in extenso*.

It is as pert a paper as a French Minister can desire to hear; and I flatter myself will lead Damas to regret that he did not close with my proposal of the three notes, or one tripartite one in the summer. I need not say that I have lauded the Yankees highly for their pertness.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

No. 6.—*Over-zeal.*

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, January, 3, 1825.

'*Sur tout, point de zêle,*' is a warning of old Talleyrand's, still more applicable to —— than Charles Jean's complaint of Pozzo's '*trop d'habilité.*'

You will see what a world of mischief he has done, by trying to supply what I dare say is a gross defect in my instructions—the giving him nothing to do.

Oh! that people would learn, that doing nothing is as often a *measure*, and full as important a one, as the most diligent activity; and that clever people could reconcile it to themselves to own, that they have no instructions when they really have none!

Here, too, has —— gone, and made two treaties with —— and of his own head, which it is utterly impossible to ratify, and by withholding the ratifications of which, nevertheless, we may risk the loss of the objects.

I begin, after all, to believe that rogues cannot be trusted; a truth which everybody admits in general, but against the acknowledgment of which everybody acts in particular instances until they suffer from it, as I am now doing.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

No. 7.—*Death of Emperor of Russia.*

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Jan. 27, 1826.

It occurs to me, since the sealing of my letter enclosing the Speech, that M. Villèle may possibly inquire why we have not mentioned the death of the Emperor of Russia?

1. It is not usual to mention the death of foreign Sovereigns in the King's Speech.

2. We did not mention that of Louis XVIII.

3. The reason of this habitual silence is a sound one. The King mentions nothing that Parliament is not expected to echo. Parliament echoes nothing without discussion. To bring a deceased foreign sovereign before Parliament for discussion would be to treat him as the ancient Egyptians did *their own* kings—judge him immediately after his death, a liberty unwarrantable with the sovereigns of other nations.

Ever affectionately yours,
GEO. CANNING.

No. 8.—*The Buonaparte Family.*

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, April 3, 1826.

I must give *some* instruction to Granville upon this silly business of the Buonaparte's family's locomotion. But surely it is time to have done with any meddling on our part in such matters. I am inclined to answer—1. That we (the English Government) cannot, by our laws, have any correspondence with the Pope of Rome.

2. As mere matter of opinion (properly anticipated by Granville), that we are decidedly against sending the Buonapartes to America.

Ever sincerely yours,
GEO. CANNING.

No. 9.—*Law Officers in the House of Commons.*

MY DEAR LIVERPOOL, Foreign Office, April 11, 1826.

After what passed last night in the House of Commons, I think it due to myself and to the Government to represent to you the

state in which we are left in that House in respect to official support.

The offices of Treasurer of the Navy and of the Master of the Mint can never henceforth be looked to as other than accessory situations, to be held by persons whose hands are otherwise full of business. They never can again stand alone as available for the *general* business of the Government.

The second Paymastership is already absorbed in the same manner. The remaining Paymastership is the single office of rank now remaining, from which any aid beyond departmental duty can be derived.

In this state of things, it behoves us to take care that other offices usually parliamentary, are not lost to us by our own fault. There are three, to which I particularly allude, which have been, for the first time, suffered to go out of Parliament by the present Government, and which, if they are not restored in the next House of Commons, will be considered to be as much lost by *desuetude* as the others which I have mentioned have been extinguished by junction with other offices or duties. I mean the *Master of the Rolls*, the *Judge Advocate*, and the *King's Advocate;* all important, in the highest degree, to the well carrying on of the King's business in the House of Commons, and all within my memory—and, till of very late years, useful and efficient supporters of the Administration.

First.—As to the Master of the Rolls. If ever there was a period when the countenance and authority of that great law-officer were wanted by a Government in the House of Commons, it is now, when the Opposition is composed in so great a proportion, not only of lawyers, but of lawyers so eminent in their profession. In *our* younger days it was quite otherwise. Fox and Sheridan, &c. constituted a formidable Opposition, it is true; but they had no *peculiar* advantages over their adversaries by professional knowledge. Erskine, great as was his name, was nothing in the House of Commons.

But Mr. Pitt had his Master of the Rolls during the whole period of his Ministerial existence; and though I admit that in the case of Sir William Grant, it was the *man* full as much as the *office* that was a host of strength, yet *there* the *man* and the *office* were, ready to do, and doing, great and essential service, and mutually reflecting strength and authority upon each other.

Now, *we* have a phalanx of lawyers against us. Half our debates turn upon law. We have especially before us the Chancery Report; the several parts of which are already distributed into the hands that are to bring them forward adversely (the Bankruptcy case is assigned to Abercrombie); and the *Master of the Rolls*, of the present day, who would be well employed, and would find full employment in defending the Court of Chancery in the House of Commons, is occupied in assisting the Chancellor in the House of Lords.

It is as new for that office to be *in* the House of Lords as it is for it to be *out* of the House of Commons.

That a *Master of the Rolls* will ever again be a peer is very improbable; but it is, I think, quite certain that, if the *next* appointment does not restore him to the House of Commons, he will never sit in *that* House again.

Secondly.—The Opposition of *your* early days had their Dr. Lawrence (I believe)—and so they had, after Windham and Lord Grenville returned to them. But Mr. Pitt had *always* his *King's Advocate* at his back—first, in the person of Sir William Scott, afterwards, of Sir J. Nicholl: and full well do I remember that, in the debate on the Spanish war in 1805, in which the discussion turned much on points of law, the brunt was borne by the Master of the Rolls and the King's Advocate, Sir William Grant and Sir John Nicholl. *Our King's Advocate* is a gentleman at large out of Parliament.

Thirdly.—The House of Commons was never before, within my memory, deprived of a *Judge Advocate*. In the hands of the present Speaker it was a high and efficient office, and one completely identified with the Administration. But if the annual debates on the discipline of the army revive (as indeed they have done this session), where are *we* (who know nothing, and are not bound to know anything about it) to turn for advice and assistance? With respect to *this* office, I am quite confident that, if it is not brought back into the *next* House of Commons we shall never see it (or, rather, it will never be seen) there again.

I confess I think it a hard case for those who bear the labour and sweat of the parliamentary warfare, that one of the very best offices of the State in point of emolument and of advantages of all kinds—*the only office out of the Cabinet that gives personal access to the King*—should be relieved altogether from the necessity of attendance in Parliament; and disjoined altogether in interest, and liability to change upon political revolutions from the Administration to which the holder of it owes his appointment.

So far as my situation in the House of Commons authorizes me to judge and to declare my opinion upon these subjects, I beg leave to protest to you, as the head of the Administration, against all these defalcations from the constitutional and accustomed support of the Government in the House of Commons—a support with which Mr. Pitt, in the plenitude of his power, never thought of dispensing; and which we, who have now the task of carrying on the King's business in the House, have as much a right to expect, for our own comfort, as we have reason to dread the loss of it to the Crown for ever, if the restoration of it be much longer delayed.

Ever, my dear Liverpool,

Most sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING.

No. 10.—*Charles the First a Papist.*

Foreign Office, May 26, 1826.

Mr. Canning most humbly lays before Y.M. a very curious document which came to his hands yesterday through those of Y.M.'s chargé d'affaires at Florence; being an attested description of a letter from King Charles I. to the Pope, in which that Monarch is said to avow himself to be of the *Roman Catholic* faith.

Mr. Canning wishes that Messrs Shiel and Hannay, the gentlemen signing this paper, had extracted the very words of King Charles's letter, instead of giving the substance of it; which of course is liable to the chance of misinterpretation.

But the allegation itself is very remarkable, and Y.M. will perhaps recollect whether there be anything tending to support it in the *Stuart Papers*, so far as they have come under Y.M.'s inspection.

No. 11.—*A Political Projector.*

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, June 1, 1826.

I return M. L. V.'s two projects; which are indeed as wild and absurd as it is either usual or advisable for political projects to be.

The civilest mode of declining to adopt them, or to enter into the discussion of them, will be to say, that they both imply acts of *war;* the Cyprian one immediate, and open; the Moldavian one, consequential, but inevitable; and that the first principle of British politics is, at the present moment, *peace;* to avoid any new disturbance of the peace of Europe; and to compose, if possible, all the differences of the world. We may fail in these objects, to be sure, but they are our objects, and we should not easily forgive ourselves or be forgiven by the present age, or by posterity, if we were wantonly to provoke, by any ambitious enterprise, a general war, which begun at this time would not leave the internal condition of any monarchy, Great Britain herself excepted, what it is.

I wish the continental Powers to understand that our dread of war is not so much for our own sake as for them.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

No. 12.—*A King's Speech.*

MY DEAR L., Foreign Office, Nov. 11, 1826.

I return your draft with a tail to it, which I hope will do.

There are two or three other alterations, small but material.

1. You must say, *when* the grain was admitted. Otherwise, the admission might be supposed general, 'and then,' in the latter part of the sentence, would be nonsense.

2. As you do not say who '*expressed*' the hope, you had better say '*entertained*,' which is not so much a personal act as expressing.

3. 'Avert' should be '*arrest.*' Pray see that this is altered in all copies. For an error becomes obstinate by transposition, and 'avert' is nonsense.

4. Q. 'Country' for '*kingdom.*'

'This kingdom' is not the way of describing England, since there has been an United Kingdom.

Ever sincerely yours,

G. C.

No. 13.—*L'une après l'autre.*

MY DEAR GRANVILLE, Foreign Office, Nov. 24, 1826.

Pozzo told me a story one day which was new to me, and made a strong impression on me, but not so strong as that I retain the names of the parties.

'Such a person,' said one of the speakers in the dialogue, 'was a 'great man; but how did he manage to do so many great things in 'his life?' 'By doing them (was the answer) *l'une après* '*l'autre.*'

I wish you would ask Pozzo who were the personages by whom, and of whom, this discourse was held.

Ever affectionately yours,

GEO. CANNING.

THE END.

00029970

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 23 March, 2016